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The American Bible College: An Eye to the Future

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THE AMERICAN BIBLE COLLEGE: AN EYE TO THE FUTURE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The American Bible college has embarked on its second century of existence and as a movement within evangelical Protestantism, it faces great challenges in the days and years ahead. The early Bible training institutes were founded in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in an effort to bridge the gap between the seminary-trained cleric and the layperson. These infant training schools were established in many urban centers and were responsible for educating practitioners who functioned as Sunday school teachers, rescue mission workers, YMCA leaders, evangelistic preachers, and overseas missionaries. For many years these "invisible colleges" maintained a vocational focus in fulfilling their mission. The flame of the movement was further fanned by the Fundamentalist/modernist debates of the 1920s. In the aftermath of the Scopes' trial, twenty-nine Bible institutes began in the decade of the Depression. These training schools were non-degree granting and for the most part offered two and three year diploma programs in areas of specific church-related ministry.

With the cessation of World War II, the United States government afforded a great many servicemen and some women the opportunity of education beyond high school. This policy provided the momentum for the Bible institutes, now called Bible colleges, to begin association with the higher education establishment. This great influx of students also allowed the Bible colleges to move securely into the 1970s without having faced many of the philosophical issues which had confronted most church-related colleges in the earlier part of the century. Institutional mission and identity, regional accreditation, general education, and secularization were just some of the issues with which Bible colleges had to wrestle as they joined the mainstream of American higher education. As to whether or not these concerns have been sufficiently addressed, only

time will tell. Needless to say, to maintain a distinctive niche in American higher education and to insure a healthier future, such questions must be aggressively rejoined by each Bible college. This study will assist in that challenge.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this study is to analyze, within an historical framework, the major stumbling blocks impeding the Bible college as it seeks to participate fully in the community of American higher education. Survival as an *evangelical Protestant* educational institution is dependent on the solutions attained in the areas of mission, regional accreditation, general education, and secularization. Survival as a *Bible college* will require even more strategic and philosophically coherent answers. For instance, an evangelical institution of higher education is charged with strategically formulating and implementing an integrated general education curriculum which is consistent with its mission and purpose. Likewise, the more focused Bible college faces the same responsibility but is charged with the task of balancing the general education core with the Bible major and ministry courses required of all students. The distinct mission and singular focus of the Bible college necessitates an intentional, deliberative philosophy of education and resultant strategic plan which not only preserves the mission but positions the Bible college to respond congruently to that mission. Any confusion on this point is certain to endanger the Bible college.

While there are hundreds of unaccredited Bible colleges and training institutions in the United States, many housed in church basements, the focus of this study is the Bible colleges accredited by the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, known for many years as the American Association of Bible Colleges (AABC). This organization, founded in 1947, is officially recognized by the US Department of Education as the accreditation agency for undergraduate Bible-college education. As of November 1994, AABC had

seventy-three full members from the United States with an average full-time enrollment of 317.[1]

There are three curricular characteristics which set the Bible college apart from other church-related, higher education institutions. The first distinctive is that each student must complete a major in Bible consisting of at least thirty credit hours. Secondly, in order to graduate, a Bible college requires each student to participate in some form of weekly Christian service or ministry. Depending on the institution, this ministry could be assigned or the student is allowed to choose a ministry which parallels his or her vocational major. The third feature of a Bible college is the professional ministry major or emphasis. Besides the Bible major, all students take a second major in a specialized field of Christian ministry which will prepare that student for full-time vocational service. As the twentieth century is drawing to a close, the Bible college has developed some very specific ministry majors. Applied linguistics, which supports Bible translation in cultures with previously unwritten languages, youth ministry, family ministry, urban ministry, sports ministry, missionary aviation, electronic music are just some of the creative majors added to the traditional trademarks such as pastoral ministry, church music, church education, and world missions.

A cousin of the Bible college is the Christian liberal arts college. The purpose of the Christian liberal arts college is to help build the church and improve society worldwide by educating men and women in the context of a strong liberal arts curriculum. History, literature, science, mathematics, fine arts, languages, pre-medicine, pre-law and pre-seminary are just some of the majors offered at a Christian liberal arts college. A thirty-hour Bible major is not required but is available. Christian service opportunities are encouraged, but not required of the students. Most of

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[1]American Association of Bible Colleges, "Program and Annual Reports of the Forty-Eighth Annual Meeting," (Fayetteville, AR.: American Association of Bible Colleges, 1995), 24-25.

the doctrinal distinctives of the two types of institutions are the same. In short, the mission of the Bible college is narrow and focused on practical ministry, while the mission of such Christian liberal arts colleges as Wheaton, Calvin, Biola, Gordon, and Messiah—to name a few—is broader and focused on the liberal arts as a springboard to a profession. Each of these institutional types play a strategic role within evangelical Protestantism and its ultimate goal of increasing and strengthening the kingdom of God. Both the Bible college and the Christian liberal arts college have wrestled with or are currently laboring under the weight of secularization fears, identity crises, general education paradigms, and accreditation challenges. There is much in common especially from an historical standpoint.

The historical background in which this study is framed is necessary for the discussion of the issues currently confronting the Bible college. It reflects the linear development of the Bible college movement and its response to the ebb and flow of American society. Biographical sketches of founding fathers and brief institutional histories are used to depict the ethos of this unique educational movement. From a theological standpoint, the Bible college movement mirrored the rise of the fundamentalist movement. From the early days, the literal interpretation of scripture was and still is a foundational tenet which eventually became a non-essential to most mainline Protestant denominations. The atmosphere precipitated by the Fundamentalist controversy of the 1920s over this issue led to a separatist mindset which did not escape the constituencies of the Bible college. From an educational standpoint, this study will show that the founders and early leaders of the Bible college movement had little or no reason to be like neighboring colleges and universities. The focus was simply to train full-time Christian workers and to get them to the front lines as soon as possible. However, as higher education became more accessible to all Americans, especially following World War II, the Bible college was faced with the choice of maintaining its

narrow focus of ministry training or changing its mission to service a broader student constituency.

This crisis of mission is evident as administrators and faculty struggle to identify the central focus of an institution which historically had a very distinct and unique mission. Several Bible colleges will be studied to better understand this identity crisis. Some Bible colleges are fastidiously preserving the historic mission of the Bible college while others are redefining "ministry" and creating corresponding ministry majors which resemble programs characteristic of Christian liberal arts institutions. On the one hand, the Bible college is more exclusive and focused, and on the other, it is more inclusive and more accessible to a greater pool of students. Accessibility and availability of higher education to a broader public has been a theme in American higher education for the last generation and the Bible college is no exception.

As the Bible college has become an active participant in the higher education community, two challenges have arisen from the education community itself—general education and regional accreditation. In the early years of the Bible college movement, general education courses were seen as necessary only as they complemented the Bible and ministry courses which dominated the curriculum. English, speech, personal hygiene and basic accounting were virtually the only available courses outside the realm of practical Christian ministry and Bible courses. As the Bible training institute evolved into the Bible college, more and more general education courses appeared in the curriculum as graduates began ministering to and with a more educated American public. As the Bible colleges began to seek regional accreditation, the pressure to develop a fundamental philosophy of general education became necessary.

Regional accreditation caused a stir in more than the general education sphere of the curriculum. For many Bible colleges, up until the 1960s, when they began to participate in the federal financial aid programs, any oversight by an external and

secular agency was thought to surely bring the college to ruin. The separatist mindset of the fundamentalist movement had fully persuaded many of the Bible colleges that alignment with a secular accrediting agency was the first step to apostasy. Aside from this challenge by the constituencies, frustration also mounted as certain Bible colleges were accepted by regional agencies and others were rejected. The desire to be recognized by the higher education community was augmented further when public and private colleges and universities unfamiliar with Bible colleges refused to accept the Bible college course credits in transfer. Today, the majority of Bible colleges have attained or are seeking regional accreditation, and with such a move comes the inevitable association with a secular or "outside" entity.

To some constituencies of the Bible college, this involvement with the secular accrediting agencies was another step closer to the "slippery slope." Secularization to most publics was going to come from the outside as the federal government or accrediting agencies "forced" the Bible colleges to change. In this study, the discussion of secularization not only reflects on the external pressures but also the internal catalysts. The Bible college has stood well against any ideological secularization; however, it is the methodological secularization which challenges the Bible college. Though defense mechanisms are in place, replacing a trustee, hiring a faculty member, or dropping "Bible" from the name all pose a threat to the historical and philosophical distinctives of the Bible college. Suggestions are given which will not only aid the Bible college in its struggle against secularization, but will position it to enter the twenty-first century healthy and vibrant seeking to honor its historic, unique, and needed mission.

Methodology

This study was undertaken within the context of the membership of AABC. Of the twenty-four colleges visited, twenty are current members, three are former members, and one has remained independent. Each campus provided a wealth of information helpful

to this study. Analysis of campus documents such as catalogs, periodicals, newsletters, and institutional histories coupled with personal interviews were the primary sources used in this study.

Sixty-one interviews were conducted on twenty of the campuses located across eight states.[2] The interviews and campus visits included all types of Bible colleges within AABC—denominational, independent; Calvinist, Arminian; large, small; urban, rural; healthy, and struggling. Likewise, a breadth of administrators and faculty were interviewed. Four presidents and denominational administrators, twenty academic deans, five faculty chairs, along with thirty-one faculty members evenly distributed across the Bible, general education, and professional ministry departments, answered questions related to institutional mission, regional accreditation, general education, secularization, and the future of the Bible college. Seven of the interviewees were women and fifty-five were men. A general estimate would place half of those interviewed over age fifty with the vast majority of the remaining in the thirty-five to fifty year range. Ten percent would have been at the instructor or assistant professor rank in their late twenties or early thirties.

The interview and documentary analysis suggest that there is ample evidence that as the Bible college stands at the brink of a new century, there are key concerns to be addressed if the Bible college is to maintain its historical distinctives. Many Bible colleges face a crisis of mission which, when left unanswered, directly affects recognition by the higher education community. Such credibility will only come with regional accreditation and the successful integration of general education into an historic Bible-laden curriculum. However, subtly underlying the aspirations of credibility is the omnipresent threat of secularization, commonly termed the "slippery slope." As each Bible college wrestles with these issues and develops specific strategies in each

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[2]The Appendix lists the campuses visited.

area of concern, survival as a Bible college into the next century will be more of a reality than a possibility. The discussion which follows points to this end.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHRONICLES OF A MOVEMENT

In 1995, the American Bible college stands at the threshold of a new century. Birthed in the late nineteenth century, the Bible college movement is primed for another one hundred years of training and educating young men and women for vocational Christian ministry. The same fire and spirit which marked the movement in the 1870s with D. L. Moody is still present, but the fan of the flames has changed in form and in function. In these days, the Bible college finds itself wrestling with mission statements in an attempt to justify its existence or it is plodding through a self-study process in search of regional accreditation. Perhaps the Bible college is grappling with the integration of general education into the once Bible-laden curriculum or it is madly assessing everything on campus from Bible knowledge to Christian character. Alas, the doorstep of a new century presents the Bible college with all the challenges associated with survival in the world of American higher education.

The last century has brought the American Bible college to the shallows of mainstream higher education. For the initial seventy-five years, the movement existed as a group of small autonomous institutions simply seeking to train young men and women for ministry or service within a local church or community service agency. The Bible college did not have to wrestle with the same external constituent pressures which other public and private colleges and universities faced year in and year out. However, once the Bible colleges organized an accrediting association and all but a handful partook of the federal and state student financial aid programs, the movement had moved into the professional ranks. The Bible college awoke to find itself in the rushing currents of

American higher education rather than floating contentedly down a quiet stream. Suddenly, a stereotypically less than credible member of higher education was bombarded with the typical concerns of parents, students, faculty, and alumni and the atypical ones of federal, state, and professional agencies.

The current challenge, then, is to analyze the response of the Bible college movement to the pressures of mission, general education, regional accreditation, secularization, and even survival. However, for a movement which has deep roots in American fundamentalism, it is necessary to build an historical framework from which to make such an analysis. Attention to the early personalities, the defining characteristics, and emerging dynamics within the context of the Protestant fundamentalist movement lays a foundations for the study of the Bible college movement. It is only from the past that one gains an understanding of how and why the Bible college movement responds as it does to the myriad of challenges generated within the mainstream of American higher education.

In analyzing the fundamentalist movement, George Marsden makes four historical divisions. The first begins in 1870 and continues through the end of World War I. The second stage is that of the religiously volatile years of 1919-1926, capped by the infamous Scopes trial. As the denominational turmoil subsided, the years 1926-1940 were spent by the fundamentalists establishing the lines which would separate them from the mainline denominations and each other. The fourth stage is 1940 to the present and reflects the resulting alliances and divisions which have given the American religious scene the Protestant step-sisters called evangelicalism and fundamentalism.[1]

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[1]George Marsden, "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism: A Historical Analysis," in The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing, ed. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (New York: Abingdon Press, 1975), 122-24. Marsden discusses the four stages of evangelicalism as it evolved from the fundamentalist movement. For purposes herein, the term "fundamentalism" will be used throughout until the fundamentalist movement divides in the 1940s into two basic

Since the current topic relates to the history of the American Bible college movement, the overview will deal with three main time periods—1870-1919,1919-26, and 1926-45. The years of 1945 to the present will be discussed as the key themes of the American Bible college are developed.

The Calm Before The Storm: The Formation of American Fundamentalism, 1870-1919

With the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, many fundamentalists were proclaiming victory over the modernistic movements within the mainline denominations of the North—especially Baptist and Presbyterian. From the fundamentalist perspective, the "war to end all wars" simply proved that the social agenda of the modernists based on the evolutionary model was a complete failure. Many assumed that the tenets of modernism would soon vanish from the pulpits of America. The theological liberals, on the other hand, claimed victory with the close of the war. The world was now ready to prepare itself for the earthly establishment of the kingdom of God.

This first phase of the fundamentalist movement, the years 1870 to 1919, was very foundational and an understanding of it is essential to a comprehension of the formation of American Bible colleges. Many of the benchmark doctrines which distinguish fundamentalism and evangelicalism to this day were formulated during this time. Likewise, many compelling and charismatic leaders known to this day left their impression on fundamentalism as well as the fledgling Bible college movement.

Characteristics of the Fundamentalist Movement

In the late 1800s, conservative Protestant men and women who would be called fundamentalists a half-century later began to reflect the common core of beliefs which came to be readily associated with fundamentalism. Through an intense study of the

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camps—the militant fundamentalists and the non-separatist evangelicals. Evangelicals are fundamentalist in doctrine but less prescriptive in matters of practice.

Bible, which was encouraged by religiously conservative periodicals and annual summer Bible conferences, an emphasis was placed on prophecy and the future millennial reign of Christ.

High view of scripture. The cornerstone doctrine which marked the fundamentalist movement was the high view of Scripture as the literal word of God. Outside of natural revelation through creation and special revelation through His Son, Jesus, Scripture was the only means by which God has revealed himself to mankind. The motto "No creed but the Bible" became the rallying cry among the early fundamentalists. As the groundwork for the Bible's exclusive authority was laid, a strong individualistic faith also developed as evidenced by the healthy growth of the early "American" denominations such as the Methodists and the Disciples. While this intense sense of individualism was growing, a paradox of reason was also forming. The fundamentalist movement began to reject the high view of reason as exemplified by the graduates from the flowering offspring of the German university—the American research university. As young modernists placed reason above faith, the early fundamentalists, and here is the paradox, would couple their own reason with Scripture and place it above human reason alone.

A prime example of this tension is found in James Brookes' initial issue of The Truth, a compilation of Bible studies and doctrinal concerns. Brookes, a Presbyterian, was one of the leaders in early fundamentalism who decried the liberal leanings of some of the popular Protestant preachers of the day. Brookes explains one of his reasons for publishing The Truth:

> Never before, perhaps, were the servants of the evil one more busy and zealous in disseminating positive error, and, what is equally or even more dangerous, perverted truth. . . . We are shocked by the indubitable proofs, constantly furnished, that infidelity is not only tolerated, but cherished and openly advocated by those who are followed as burning and shining lights of the Church.

Brookes continues his description of "the most popular preacher in America" when "speaking of the Sacred Scriptures, [he] does not hesitate to affirm, that 'if anything in them does not approve itself to the reason and moral sense as true it is to be rejected.' "[2]

So began the struggle between reason alone and faith and reason. For the next century the rationalism of the modern mind would win over the faith, which to outsiders was simplistic and irrational, of those who chose to follow Scripture in its literal sense. It was not a blind faith to the fundamentalists, but a reasoned one.

An example of this reasoned faith is evidenced by the intense efforts put into inductive Bible study. This method used many of the principles espoused by the new scientific method. Sprouting from Princeton Seminary, the methodology was articulated by Charles Hodge who insisted that theology and the study of the Bible must be pursued scientifically. In 1871, Hodge wrote in the first volume of his systematic theology that "As natural science was a chaos until the principle of induction was admitted and faithfully carried out, so theology is a jumble of human speculation, not worth a straw, when men refuse to apply the same principle to the study of the Word of God . . ."[3]

This scientific approach to Scripture by means of inductive Bible study satisfied the intellectual bent of many of the early fundamentalists. While rejecting the anti-supernaturalistic result of German higher education, the fundamentalists by faith accepted the miracle accounts of Scripture and by means of inductive Bible study formulated their theology. Sandeen describes this epistemology as being divided between "reason and mysticism" or "fact and inner light."[4]

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[2]James H. Brookes, ed., The Truth: Testimony for Christ (St. Louis: Chas. B. Cox, 1875), 3.

[3]Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol. 1, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981), 14-15.

[4]Earnest R. Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism," Church History 36 (March 1967): 73.

There were two long-standing results which reflected upon the American Bible college as the struggle over the Scriptures and supernaturalism began between the fundamentalists and the theological liberals. By standing firm in accepting the supernatural elements of Scripture the fundamentalist was labeled as anti-intellectual. The educated minds of America could not conceive of other intellectuals accepting on blind faith the entire Biblical account. Though educated, reason would demand that such a person had an inferior education. As the fundamentalist movement evolved and moved away from the mainstream of American Protestantism, the "anti-intellectual" tag became more predominant even though many of the early fundamentalists were trained at the elite universities and seminaries of the East. The greater the effort which was made toward dialogue between the early fundamentalists and modernists, the less a factor anti-intellectualism became. Unfortunately, dialogue would be replaced by verbal and written warfare.

The second result of this feud led the early fundamentalists, though labeled as anti-intellectual, to make the Bible a textbook by seeking to "rightly divide the Word of Truth." Louis Gasper correctly defined what was to become the primary curriculum of the Bible training school. "In all Bible Institutes the principal textbook was the English Bible, and to understand it much time was required. Although other types of schools offered courses in religion, none offered extensive Bible-study courses. . . . Thus the Bible Institutes became a school of specialization in one book."[5] The knowledge gained by this in-depth study of the English Bible would allow the students to be more effective in the lay ministry to which they had been called. This trademark of early fundamentalism, an intense desire for individualized inductive Bible study, led directly to another distinctive of fundamentalism—millenarianism.

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[5]Louis Gasper, The Fundamentalist Movement, 1930-1956 (The Netherlands: Mouton & Company, 1963; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 94-95 (page references are to reprint edition).

Millenarianism. Millenarianism or millenialism is the belief in a future one thousand year period of holiness during which Christ is to rule the earth. In eschatological terms, a premillenialist is one who believes Christ will return to begin His reign after an extreme judgment of the earth called the Tribulation. This period of wrath will be triggered by mankind's continual spiral into sin and unrighteousness. The postmillenialist, on the other hand, has a much higher view of mankind. He believes that Christ will return to assume his earthly throne only after mankind himself, endowed with his own divine righteousness, completes the task of preparing an earth perfect enough for Christ to take his rightful place. While postmillenialism, with its high view of man and emphasis on the immanency of God, was by far the predominant view of the nineteenth century, the inductive Bible study espoused by the fundamentalists led many to become premillenialists as God in his transcendent glory sought judgment on his disobedient creation. This millenarian theme, and specifically premillenialism, became a trademark of fundamentalism.

This millennial movement can be attributed to several factors. Those within the fundamentalist movement saw it as a natural outgrowth of a literal interpretation of Scripture. A. J. Gordon, the founder of the Boston Missionary Training School, strongly defended premillenialism as he planned his new school. Speaking of his fellow Northern Baptist colleagues, Gordon stated:

> Pres. Andrews is not alone in his hostility to the "pre-millenial craze." It seems to be the especial butt of our theological leaders. Dr. Northrop presiding at the Missionary Union Meeting in Chicago assailed it in his opening speech in the most vigorous manner, slurring those who professed to make the hope of the Lord's coming their inspiration for missionary endeavour. With great vehemence he said that Christ had not returned for 1800 years, and there was no reason to expect that he would return for one million eight hundred thousand years yet—which sentence was loudly applauded! . . . I cannot but feel that the men of the premillennial school with their straightforward literal interpretation are going to be used of God to keep the old faith. . . . It seems to me that this doctrine rightly considered furnishes the greatest possible comfort and stimulus to those who, like yourself, are called to meet the

trials and discouragements of missionary life. Why should the hope be destroyed by a false exegesis?[6]

It is plain to see Gordon's emphasis on "straightforward literal interpretation" over a "false exegesis." Gasper, on the other hand, simply equated the "pre-millennial craze" with the social conditions of the mid-1800s. He described the followers of premillenialism as "Those people who probably were impatient with conditions as they found them at the time, longed for the establishment of a divine utopia on earth which could be realized when Christ returned to the earth with His saints to rule in person for a thousand years."[7] It is easy to attribute this view to the societal condition of the masses; however, the proponents of fundamental premillenialism were educated men. The first of many within the American society who were reaping the benefits of the flourishing higher education system.

While societal conditions might possibly explain the influence of William Miller, the Adventist who incorrectly predicted the return of Christ on 21 March 1843, they do not explain the sustaining power of millenialism within the fundamentalist movement in light of Miller's embarrassment. The millenialists embraced the same rationalistic method of the day as Darwin though with conflicting results—one with an evolutionary hypothesis and the other a supernatural positivism. One targeted the Bible; the other, the world. Nathan Hatch states that in contrast to the "antirational and mystical" elements of millenarianism on the Continent, "the tenor of popular millenialism in America was decidedly rationalistic, as self-made students of Scripture eschewed

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[6]Adoniram Judson Gordon to an unnamed missionary, 4 July 1890, quoted in George G. Houghton, "The Contributions of Adoniram Judson Gordon to American Christianity" (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1970), 197.

[7]Gasper, 8.

speculation and claimed to draw principles inductively from what Alexander Campbell called the 'facts of the Bible.'"[8]

Whether or not the foundations of millenarianism, or for that matter fundamentalism, are based on societal or philosophical causes is a lengthy discussion. For the purposes of this discussion it is paramount to understand the entire belief system which came to be known as fundamentalism by the 1920s. These basic tenets are true to this day and are an integral part in understanding the American Bible college. Sandeen described the key elements of the "millenarian creed" as follows:

> 1) the acceptance of the divine authority of Scriptures required that the believer expect a literal rather than a spiritual fulfillment of the prophecies.
>
> 2) the gospel was not intended nor was it going to accomplish the salvation of the world, but that, instead the world was growing increasingly corrupt and rushing toward imminent judgment.
>
> 3) Jesus Christ would literally return to this earth and the Jews would be restored to Palestine before the commencement of the millennial age.
>
> 4) this whole panorama of coming glory and judgment was explicitly foretold in the prophecies where one could, if taught by the Spirit, discover the truth and be ready for the coming of the bridegroom (Christ).[9]

By 1870, many pastors and more educated lay persons were beginning to informally accept much of the above creed. This was especially true of the Northern Baptists and Northern Presbyterians, both of whom were on a collision course with the denominational leaders who represented the modernist position. The frustration level increased not only as the spiritual began to collide with the physical, but as rational, educated men and women were forced to choose between science or the Bible as their

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[8]Nathan O. Hatch, "Millenialism and Popular Religion in the Early Republic" in The Evangelical Tradition in America, ed. Leonard I. Sweet (Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 1984), 124.

[9]Earnest R. Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism, British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 39 (page references are to reprint edition).

ultimate source of knowledge. As this question became more pronounced, those who espoused the fundamentals of the faith began to consciously develop networks which would further strengthen their stand within the religious community and would win others to their cause.

Conferences, periodicals, and Bible training schools. What is important to note at this juncture is how the early fundamentalists with little, if any, denominational support were able to solidify and extend their influence. Though loosely organized, the fundamentalists used three main avenues by which to not only stem the tide of modernism but to also increase and strengthen their own ranks. Conferences, periodicals, and Bible training schools were the three major thrusts which informally developed over the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The most organized fundamentalist strategy was the formation by the premillenialists of regional prophecy conferences. The most historic of these was the Niagara conference held annually from 1878 to 1900. Two weeks each summer, pastors and laypersons dedicated to concentrated Bible study gathered together to uphold the millennial teachings of Scripture. The Niagara conferences were initiated by the founding fathers of what was to be known as fundamentalism. James Brookes, an influential pastor and editor of The Truth; William J. Erdman, a pastor in Chicago and one of the founders of Moody Bible Institute; and Adoniram Judson Gordon, a Boston pastor and founder of the Boston Missionary Training School were but three of the leading fundamentalist leaders who initiated the Niagara conferences. In the first year at Niagara, the leaders adopted the "Niagara Creed" which is very similar to Sandeen's overview of the fundamentalist dogma as stated previously. Heavy emphasis continued on in-depth Bible study, the inspiration of Scriptures, the deity of Christ, and the literal return of Jesus Christ to reign on earth.

Other conferences also dotted the landscape. Five international prophetic conferences highlighting the premillenial return of Christ and other prophetic themes were held sporadically from 1878 until World War I. Other doctrinal issues were also headlined. In 1887, a conference on Biblical inspiration was held in Philadelphia while three summers later there were two conferences convened to discuss the person and work of the Holy Spirit.[10]

These intermittent conferences and the Niagara conferences paralleled the development of the Northfield Conference hosted by D. L. Moody in his hometown of Northfield, Massachusetts. In 1880, the inaugural year, Moody invited "all ministers and laymen, and those women who are fellow-helpers and laborers together with us . . . not so much to study the Bible (though the Scriptures will be searched daily for instruction and promises) as for solemn self-consecration, and to plead God's promises, and to wait upon Him for a fresh anointment of power on high." A. T. Pierson, a reporter for the Northfield Echoes, gave a flavor of the Northfield conference. "Northfield has made to itself a name as the 'Home of Conventions.' It has become a New England Jerusalem, whither the tribes of the Lord go up annually, to keep solemn feast and joyous festivals." As to the purpose of the conventions, Pierson reported, "*Bible study, mutual conference, devout prayer, waiting for enduement* have been the conspicuous features; and during the later convocations there has been much comparison of methods of Christian work."[11] The topics of the Northfield conferences reinforced in the hearts and minds of all the attendees the key elements of fundamentalism—Bible study, millenialism, holiness of life, and spiritual power for Christian service.

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[10]Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation," 72-76.

[11]Arthur T. Pierson, "The Story of the Northfield Conferences," Northfield Echoes 1 (June 1894): 12.

One of the earliest periodicals to represent the fundamentalist movement was The Truth: Testimony for Christ. James H. Brookes, the editor, was one of the original members of the Niagara group that spawned the Niagara conferences. A pastor in St. Louis, Brookes stated his purpose for The Truth in the inaugural issue in 1875:

> . . . it is proper to inform our readers that we shall maintain . . . the plenary and verbal inspiration of the Sacred Script; the divine dignity of the person of His eternal Son; the utter ruin and death in sin in the whole human race, as born into the world; our indispensable need of the Holy Spirit to produce new life.

He continues:

> It is our aim to encourage diligent and devout study of the word of life, brief and plain expositions of Scripture will be given, with special reference to the elucidation of passages commonly regarded as obscure in meaning, or difficult of comprehension.[12]

For twenty-three years Brookes edited this annual volume of over five hundred pages which helped to water the roots of the fundamentalist movement.

At about the same time that Brookes merged The Truth with another fundamentalist periodical, D. L. Moody began the Bible Institute Colportage Association. Organized in 1894, Moody's plan was to publish affordable fundamentalist pamphlets and pocket-sized books. Fleming H. Revell, Moody's brother-in-law, took the risk and began peddling the books at a cost of ten cents apiece. Titles were very representative of the basic fundamentalist themes—The Way to God, Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study, Heaven and How to Get There, Prevailing Prayer, and To The Work. Within ten years approximately 1.5 million copies had been published.[13]

The Truth and Moody's Colportage Association were but two of the periodicals which helped to extend and strengthen the fundamentalist movement. The topics of Bible study,

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[12]Brookes, 4-5.

[13]Gene A. Getz, MBI: The Story of Moody Bible Institute, revised and updated by James M. Vincent (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 136; "Annual Report of the Moody Bible Institute for the year 1903," 17; in Archives, Henry Coleman Crowell Learning Resource Center, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.

prophecy, service, and evangelism echoed in the printed page what the Northfield, Niagara, and similar conferences were preaching every summer. Generally speaking, the periodicals were targeted to the general public while the most serious Bible students and pastors gravitated to the conferences.

The print media and the conferences organized by the fundamentalists laid the groundwork for the Bible institutes or Bible training schools. These schools became the training centers for Christian workers who were sympathetic to the key doctrines of fundamentalism. While the Bible conferences were based more theologically and the periodicals were geared for popular interest, the Bible institute became the center for training practical Christian workers. The lessons learned from Bible study were put to practice by training school graduates in the local YMCA, Salvation Army, rescue missions, rural pastorates, and large urban Sunday Schools. The Bible institute became a vocational school for Christian service much like the hundreds of denominational liberal arts colleges trained doctors, lawyers, teachers, and bankers.

It is in this setting in which a handful of Bible institutes were founded from the 1880s to 1919. A compact look at three of these institutions and their founders will shed light on the development of what was later to become the Bible College movement.

Dwight L. Moody and the Moody Bible Institute

Volumes have been written on the greatest evangelist of the nineteenth century. Born on 5 February 1837 in Northfield, Massachusetts, Dwight Lyman Moody was the sixth child in a poor family. His father passed away when he was four and with but the equivalent of a fifth grade education Moody went to the city of Boston when he was seventeen. There, Moody successfully worked for his uncle selling shoes and boots. It was at this time in 1855 when Moody responded to his Sunday School teacher's simple appeal and accepted God's love by committing his life to Christ. A year later, Moody went

to Chicago to become wealthy, and was well on his way to achieving that goal, when in 1860, he gave up his life in business and devoted his life to Christian service.[14]

Moody was a man of vision and action. When he wasn't working with the YMCA, a group of street "urchins," Sunday Schools, or noontime prayer meetings, Moody still found time to minister to the Northern troops during the Civil War. A picture of Moody's simple but extensive ministry can be drawn from the following excerpt of a letter from Moody to his brother Samuel dated "Jany 13/62:"

> I am very sorry I have not answered your three last letters but I have had so much to do I could not find time you seem to be very ancious to know what I am doing this winter well I will tell you I am agent for the City Relief Society that is to take care of the poore of the city I have some 500 hundred or 800 people that are dependent on us for their daily food & new ones coming all of the time I keep a Saddall horse to ride around with to hunt up the poore people with & then I have a man to waite on the folks as they come to my office I make my head quarters at the rooms of the Young Mens Christian association & then I have just raised money enough to erect a chapell for the Soldiers at the Camp 3 miles from the city I hold a meeting down there every day & 2 in the city so you see I have 3 meetings to attend to every day bes side calling on the sick & that is not all I have to go into the country every week to buy wood & provisions for the poore also coal wheet meal and corn then I have to go to hold meetings I was sent for last month to go to [?] Elgin to a prayer meeting 36 miles just to one prayer meeting I had a very good time I have not told you all I doing I am also raising money to buy Himbooks for the soldiers I am one of the army Commitey [?] & we hold meetings once a week & then we have to distribute the books to the different companeys you do not know how much I have to do I speak about 3 times a day from 10 minuets to one hour I do not get 5 minuets a day to study so I have to talk just as it happens & now I have told you what I am a doing. . . .[15]

Dwight L. Moody never rested. By early 1864, his Illinois Street Church, which had evolved from his Sunday School work, had a new building with auditorium space for

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[14]D. L. Moody has been the subject of many biographies. Two of the most diverse are William R. Moody, D. L. Moody (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930) and James F. Findlay Jr., Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837-1899 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

[15]Dwight L. Moody to Samuel Moody, 13 January 1862, Moodyanna Collection, Henry Coleman Crowell Learning Resource Center, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.

fifteen hundred people. By the end of 1865, Moody's church boasted the second largest Sunday School in Chicago.[16]

Two years after the 1871 Chicago Fire, D. L. Moody began what was to be a quarter century of mass evangelism. It was between the trips to the British Isles and hundreds of meetings across the states that Moody, with the help of Emma Dryer, began what was then the Chicago Evangelization Society. From 1883 to 1889, Miss Dryer operated an annual May Institute which was a concentrated month of Bible study and skill development for Christian ministry—two distinctive elements of the Bible training school. In its first year, there were fifty men and women enrolled from around the country. In the spring of 1888, Dryer also organized a three month school term for women called the Bible Work Institute. The purpose of these institutes was "to give thorough instruction in the Word of God, and a practical training in the various forms of Christian work."[17] In September 1889, the year-round formal training program began.

On 23 January 1886, D. L. Moody gave an address which explained his purpose in founding what was initially the Chicago Bible Institute. With a heart for city ministry, Moody did not feel that the men and women being trained in the seminaries could relate their message to the people of the city. Therefore Moody called for lay persons to step forward and meet the need of the cities. Moody cried from his pulpit, "I believe we have got to have gap-men—men to stand between laity and the ministers; men who are trained to do city mission work."[18] Two and a half years later after Moody had raised funds from

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[16]Stanley N. Gundry, Love Them In: The Life and Theology of D. L. Moody (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 38.

[17]Getz, 25.

[18]Chicago Tribune, 23 January 1886, 3.

Chicago's wealthiest, Cyrus McCormick Jr., T. W. Harvey, and Robert S. Scott, the Chicago Bible Institute opened with men and women being trained to stand in the "gap."

The objectives of the Chicago Bible Institute became more formalized as the years progressed. In 1895 the catalog stated, "The object of the school, stated in general terms, is to train men and women in the knowledge and practical use of the Bible. . . . It is not the aim of the Institute to do the work of theological seminaries or conservatories of music, but rather to aid and supplement these." Women were encouraged to prepare themselves for "house visitation, cottage meetings, children's meetings, women's meetings, and industrial schools" as well as for opportunities in "tent meetings, inquiry meetings, and mission meetings. Men were to prepare "to act as pastor's assistants, city missionaries, general missionaries, Sunday school missionaries, evangelists, and musicians." By 1916, the general objective had been condensed to reflect the articles of incorporation. The objective was "to educate, direct, encourage, maintain, and send forth Christian workers, Bible readers, gospel singers, teachers, and evangelists competent to effectively teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ."[19]

Thus began the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago (MBI), founded by an uneducated but energetic and self-taught man with a vision and heart-tug for the cities of the world. Denominational boundaries were of no concern as Moody trained Christian workers in the Bible, in the Christian life, and in the methods of evangelizing the city. The founding of Moody Bible Institute, the mother of all Bible and missionary training schools, truly reflected the initial stages of many of the early institutions. Only a handful were founded by the turn of the century and several were directly influenced by Moody and his Chicago school.

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[19]Getz, 47-49.

Adoniram J. Gordon and the Boston Missionary Training School

Adoniram Judson Gordon was a close friend of D. L. Moody's and assisted Moody by overseeing the Northfield Conferences and even teaching at his Chicago school. The son of A. J. Gordon recounts:

> The summer of '93 found Dr. Gordon again in Chicago, lecturing to students of the Bible Institute and preaching in the great meeting which Mr. Moody had organized in that city. . . . For a whole month Gordon preached to hungry thousands, teaching all the while at the school on Institute Place. The influence of this work of Mr. Moody and his assistants was very far-reaching, and important in the life of thousands.[20]

Interestingly, Gordon had started his own school in 1889, the same year Moody's school had become a year-round program.

Adoniram Judson Gordon was born in New Hampshire on 19 April 1836, several months before Moody's birth in neighboring Massachusetts. Gordon's life reflected that of his famous missionary namesake, Adoniram Judson, as Gordon himself was responsible for sending hundreds of young men and women into overseas missionary work. While Moody had been raised Unitarian, Gordon was raised Baptist and trusted Christ as his personal savior when he was sixteen years old. He attended a denominational preparatory school and later graduated from Brown in 1860, followed by Newton Theological Institution in 1863. In contrast to Moody, Gordon was well-educated and steeped in his denomination, having gone to three Baptist institutions. Gordon pastored for over thirty years, edited The Watchword, a fundamentalist journal, and later in life founded the Boston Missionary Training School.

The Boston Missionary Training School had its roots in Moody's annual Northfield Conferences. Dr. Gordon was associated with Moody in his inaugural conference in 1880 and hosted subsequent conferences when Moody was overseas or engaged in his Chicago work. While one purpose of the Northfield Conferences was to provide for extensive

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[20]Ernest B. Gordon, Adoniram Judson Gordon: A Biography (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1896), 335-36.

Bible study and prophetic teaching, Northfield eventually became a whistle stop for missionaries on furlough from their foreign assignments. This developing foreign missions emphasis corresponded nicely into the message of service constantly espoused at Northfield. In 1886 "ten young men, representing as many different peoples—Siam, China, India, Persia, Armenia, Japan, Norway, Denmark, Germany, and the Indians of America—made short addresses, at the close of which they repeated in their various tongues, 'God is Love.' It was a new Pentecost!"[21] One hundred students answered the call to foreign mission service that week. As a result, Northfield hosted a student missionary conference annually into the early 1900s.

This was the beginning of the Student Volunteer Movement which was rekindled each summer at Northfield. Attendance averaged four hundred students each summer representing from up to 120 colleges and universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Utrecht, Yale, Harvard, Brown, Cornell, Bates, Columbia, and Dartmouth. In 1893, a young women's conference was hosted at Northfield with "over 200 women from thirty-one educational institutions, societies, and associations. They came to study the Word of Life and sword of the Spirit and confer as to the practical Christian work open to their sex." While young men and women were sensing a call to foreign missionary work, Dr. A. J. Gordon was sensing a call to open a missionary training school.[22]

In October 1889, the Boston Missionary Training School opened its doors in Dr. Gordon's Clarendon Street Church. In explaining the nature of the school, Gordon echoed Moody's chorus of "the time has come to call out reserves--to put into the field a large force of lay workers." Gordon's specific purpose was to train workers for the

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[21]A. T. Pierson, 6-7.

[22]Ibid., 7-8; Delavan L. Pierson, ed., Northfield Echoes X (East Northfield, MA.: The Northfield Bookstore, 1903), 95; A. T. Pierson, 11.

mission field whereas Moody's initial thrust was training workers for urban ministry. Both, however, felt that college and seminary education were not that essential as long as the men and women knew "enough of their Bible to lead souls to Christ, and to instruct converts in the simple principles of the gospel."[23]

This "short-cut" method of training did not sit well with Gordon's Northern Baptist denomination. Gordon, in defense of his school and others like it, stated:

> Let it be clearly understood, in fine, that this undertaking is not for promoting any "new ministerial short-cut,". . . but an humble effort undertaken . . . to enlist for lay missionary service some men and women who otherwise might not find their way into this work. . . . As we secure such, [we propose] to test them by a year's experience in city mission work, and if we find those whose age and circumstances warrant them in going to college or seminary, to help them in their way thither; and to give to others the best practical and biblical instruction we can.[24]

Critics of Gordon's project insinuated that the school had no brains and no money so denounced it as "a movement for revising the educational qualifications among Baptists and as an accusation of incompetence against our seminaries."[25]

Gordon's simple defense was that his training school was simply "an effort to enlarge the educational advantages of those whose opportunities for mental discipline have been limited by poverty, lack of worldly advantages, or the responsibilities arising from the care of others."[26] This tiff within the Northern Baptists sheds light on a dynamic which was not an issue with Moody in Chicago. Moody's work had begun as a result of interdenominational efforts and initially was not a threat to seminaries. By 1900, however, some of the denominations that were sympathetic of their fellow

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[23]Adoniram Judson Gordon, "Short-Cut Methods," The Watchman 70 (7 November 1889): 1, quoted in Houghton, 1970, 193.

[24]Ibid., 195.

[25]Ernest B. Gordon, 265.

[26]A. J. Gordon, "As to 'Short-Cut' Methods," The Watchman 71 (6 March 1890): 1, quoted in Houghton, 1970, 202.

fundamentalists were beginning to resent the training schools and the specific doctrines for which they stood. This was simply a precursor of the major denominational warfare which was to come two decades later, one of whose leaders was William Bell Riley, a fundamentalist firebrand who also had rubbed shoulders with D. L. Moody.

William Bell Riley and the Northwestern Bible Training School

The public life and ministry of William Bell Riley served as the bridge that took fundamentalism from a *movement* to a *controversy*. A self-made man like D. L. Moody, Riley labored as a preacher, evangelist, debater, and administrator who by the age of eighty-six had founded three institutions of higher learning. The Northwestern schools, as they came to be called, consisted of a Bible training school, college, and seminary. It was on his deathbed that he passed the mantle of his presidency to a youthful evangelist who, against his better judgment, served for three and a half years. History has proven that the Rev. Billy Graham had a higher calling than that of college president.

William Bell Riley was born in southern Indiana in 1861 to a family of tenant farmers and moved at an early age to Boone County, Kentucky with his family. Riley farmed tobacco in his youth to raise enough money for an education. His one year at Valparaiso Normal School earned him a teacher's certificate so he could teach his way through college. Riley attended Hanover College, a Presbyterian institution, with designs on a law career and a life of pleasure. But Riley, like Jacob, wrestled with God and after some sleepless nights recounted:

> The fight was on! After some months of turmoil, at last I reluctantly said, "I will! I will preach!" A thousand times have I thanked God for calling and even compelling—for that is what it meant to me—and since the day when my roughly-clothed knees were driven into the black loam of the Kentucky hillside, as I knelt between two rows of tobacco to surrender, I have never had a regret—nor have I had one doubt as to the divine will concerning my work.[27]

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[27]Marie Acomb Riley, The Dynamic of a Dream: The Life Story of Dr. William B. Riley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1938) 32. This is a biography

Riley preached his way through college and seminary and held small country pastorates before moving to Chicago and then on to Minneapolis.

While pastoring the Calvary Baptist Church in Chicago from 1893 to 1897, Riley was able to observe Moody and his work at the institute firsthand. This was not Riley's first exposure to Moody, however. According to C. Allyn Russell, Riley first met Moody in 1887 when Moody was holding revival meetings in Louisville on the seminary grounds. Riley appreciated Moody's simplistic message and directness of speech, something for which Riley became known. "Ironically," notes Russell, "the broad and tolerant spirit of Moody did not appear to make a corresponding impact on Riley."[28] After four years in Chicago, Riley settled at the First Baptist Church in Minneapolis, a church he would be affiliated with for the next fifty years.

Riley had been in Minneapolis for five years when he and a small company of laymen representing several different denominations established a Bible training school. Riley's basis for starting his school was somewhat different from Moody's and Gordon's. While Moody and Gordon sought to train "gap-men" for city work and foreign missionary service, Riley's passion was to strengthen the Baptist denomination, especially in the Northwest. This was neither a personal nor a denominational motivation but was simply the need which existed in the Northwest at the turn of the century. The state of Minnesota had almost three hundred Baptist churches, ninety of which were without a pastor. Iowa had 152 such churches. Having been a product of a small country church and understanding its important community impact, Riley purposed to rectify this situation.[29]

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by Riley's second wife of which the first several chapters are autobiographical.

[28]C. Allyn Russell, Voices of American Fundamentalism (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1967), 239.

[29]Riley, 146-48.

In 1902, the Northwestern Bible Training School opened with no property, no money, only seven students, and with Riley and his associate as the only teachers. By the end of the year, the day classes had increased in size to thirty-five so that an actual school seemed plausible. Riley was quick to hire a dean and within two years the school had its own building. The Northwestern Bible Training School initially offered a two year program for men and women seeking a Christian ministry, but Riley's personal focus, however, was to fill the many empty pulpits of the Baptist churches in Minnesota and Iowa.

It was but a short time before Riley had another purpose for his Northwestern school. Riley became one of the first administrators of the handful of Bible institutes to publicly challenge the dearth of training men were receiving in the denominational seminaries. As noted earlier, Moody strongly emphasized that his school would not replace the seminary and that the seminary still played a vital role in preparing ministers. Riley, on the other hand, twenty-five years after Moody had eased the tensions with the seminaries, was not so diplomatic. With the creeping menace of modernism having infiltrated the denominational seminaries, Riley now purposed to provide qualified pastors to pulpits in the large metropolitan centers as well as in the hinterlands. With this new mandate, Riley increased the length of his curriculum to three years to insure that the graduates would not only be able to preach but to gain victory over the modernistic movement.[30]

Riley's aggressive response to the liberal modernism which was beginning to be the accepted norm in many of the northern denominations was a precursor to the intense and heated struggles which were to follow. From roughly 1870 up until World War I,

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[30]William V. Trollinger Jr., "One Response to Modernity: Northwestern Bible School and the Fundamentalist Empire of William Bell Riley" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1984), 131. Trollinger has since published this work under the title, God's Empire: William Bell Riley and Midwestern Fundamentalism (Madison, WI.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

fundamentalism was but a conservative Protestant interdenominational movement with key doctrinal distinctives and a simple passion to evangelize the world. The fundamentalist movement peacefully coexisted within the mainline denominations as modernism began to make inroads. The Northern Baptist's disappointment with A. J. Gordon and his "short-cut" school was a minor confrontation in comparison of what was on the horizon. It was not until after the war years that those within the fundamentalist movement sought to "save" their respective denominations from the throes of modernism. It is within this heated atmosphere that many new Bible training schools were founded. By 1930, there were approximately fifty institutions on the list of Bible colleges many of which were a direct reaction to the rise of modernism in this period of American religious history.

The Fundamentalist Crusade, 1919-1926

The seven years following the close of World War I were foundational in the development of many Bible training schools, soon to be known as Bible institutes or Bible colleges. The millenarian or fundamentalist movement rapidly developed from a quasi-organized system of beliefs successfully coexisting across denominational lines to an organized fighting machine seeking to purify two or three of the largest Protestant denominations. This effort of denominational cleansing sought to purge members of both the clergy and laity who reflected the modernistic beliefs of the day.

At the turn of the century there were distant warnings given by the fundamentalists as to the harm modern higher criticism and the evolutionary presupposition could bring to basic historical religious beliefs. The close of World War I, however, initiated a grand ideological battle on the religious front not unlike many of the business/labor clashes of the same time period. Prohibition, evolution, strikes, Bolshevism—whatever the subject of the day—American society reacted intensely one way or the other. These intense struggles did not escape the world of the

Northern Baptists, Northern Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, and other smaller Protestant denominations.

The American Bible college continued to develop in the midst of what had now become the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. Though efforts were made by some to insulate the Bible training school from such controversy, others used the Bible college movement as a haven from modernism and a base of operations from which to attack the modernists. Since some of the major targets of the fundamentalists were the larger private church-related colleges and universities, it is not surprising that this conflict left a stigma upon the Bible institutes. For this reason, the controversy will be examined along with the impact it had on the Bible college movement.

Fundamentalism versus Modernism

The emotional upheaval surrounding the fundamentalist controversy was tremendous. It was vicious and it led to the vilification of any or all Protestant leaders who held gallantly to one side of the issue or the other. Neutrality was not an option. One could not read the pages of the liberal Christian Century or the conservative Moody Bible Institute Monthly without sensing the antagonistic spirit or even deep-seated hatred a fundamentalist might have for a modernist or a liberal for a conservative. While both sides blamed the other for instigating the struggle, two important developments within fundamentalism fanned the flames of the controversy—the printing of The Fundamentals and the founding of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association.

Many movements are supported by major benefactors and fundamentalism was no exception. In the case of the fundamentalist controversy, Lyman and Milton Stewart, brothers and chief stockholders in Union Oil Company, were the major financial backers. From 1910 to 1915, twelve volumes entitled The Fundamentals were published at a cost

of $300,000 for three million copies.[31] Sixty-four conservative authors representing both the millenarian and non-millenarian camps affirmed the key themes of fundamentalism for the purpose of reasserting "the truth of the Christian faith" and strengthening those Christians "who were being seduced by biblical criticism and contemporary unbelief." The seven key doctrinal topics discussed were:

1) the verbal inspiration of the Bible as originally given,
2) the deity of Christ,
3) the vicarious death of Jesus,
4) the personality of the Holy Spirit,
5) the necessity of a personal infilling of the Spirit for victorious Christian living,
6) the personal return of Christ, and
7) the urgency of the speedy evangelization of the world.[32]

A "Publisher's Notice" in the final volume described the audience the Stewart brothers were seeking to reach:

> All English-speaking Protestant pastors, evangelists, missionaries, theological professors, theological students, Y. M. C. A. secretaries, Y. W. C. A. secretaries, Sunday School superintendents, religious lay workers, and editors of religious publications throughout the earth, who so desire, are entitled to a free copy of each volume of "The Fundamentals."[33]

The Stewarts mailed copies of The Fundamentals to ministers and laypersons throughout the world with approximately one-third sent to countries outside the United States. Though there are questions as to whether or not these volumes represented a Christian

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[31]It is interesting to note that two antagonists in the oil industry also were philanthropic antagonists. John D. Rockefeller invested heavily in the University of Chicago and William Rainey Harper. The University of Chicago was not kind to fundamentalists. Shailer Mathews, editor of Biblical World, and Shirley Case Jackson (The Millenial Hope, 1918), from the UC Developmental School, were relentless in their attacks on the millenarians.

[32]Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism, 188; Lyman Stewart to J. W. Baer, 7 February 1907, Lyman Stewart Papers, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, in Sandeen, Roots of Fundamentalism, 192.

[33]Reuben A. Torrey, ed., The Fundamentals, vol. 12 (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Company, 1915), 6.

consensus, its publication became the unofficial first salvo in the fundamentalist controversy.

If The Fundamentals was the first attack on liberalism, then William Bell Riley was one of the generals to lead a second charge. Already a pastor and founder of the Northwest Bible Training School, Riley's first volley came in 1917 when he published The Menace of Modernism, a diatribe against higher criticism, liberal pulpits, pagan universities, and lukewarm denominational colleges. Buoyed by large attendance at prophecy conferences during World War I, Riley called for a confederacy of conservatives which would move beyond prophetic topics to the preservation of the fundamentals of the faith. Spearheaded by a conference in the summer of 1919, the World's Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA) was launched with Riley proclaiming the event a "more historic moment than the nailing up at Wittenburg of Martin Luther's ninety-five theses."[34] A taste of the battle which was yet to be fought on the floor of the denominational meetings was described in one of the WCFA's first publications:

> During comparatively recent years, Higher Criticism of the Bible, known as Rationalism or Modernism, has secured a strangle hold on the throat of practically every evangelical denomination, and seeks entire control not only of pulpits and schools, but foreign mission fields as well. Already this infidelity concerning inspiration, deity and atonement has wrought untold harm. How to throw off this deadly grip is the problem of all orthodox men and women who love the Lord and His Word, and hold to the Fundamentals of Christianity. . . .
>
> The object of our Association, therefore, is to meet this menace of false education—an enemy of the Church of God—in a fair field, and by proving its unscientific and even Satanic character, turn the people at large back to the fundamentals of the Christian faith.[35]

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[34]Trollinger, 65.

[35]William B. Riley, "World's Christian Fundamentals Association: It's Occasion, Confessions of Faith, and Objective," Christian Fundamentalist 1 (September 1927): 2.

Though the battle was lost at the Scopes trial and the subsequent passing of William Jennings Bryan in 1925, the founding of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association correctly displayed the feelings held toward the modernists during this controversial period.

The modernists, likewise, reciprocated in their feelings toward the fundamentalists. An editorial in the liberal Christian Century illustrated some of the basic issues which infuriated the fundamentalists. By deconstructing the person of Jesus the liberals claimed:

> The result of this vast labor in archeology and history and literary criticism has been to strip away many accretions of the centuries and to give men of our world the virgin sense of meeting Jesus for the first time.
>
> And the significant thing is that this scholarly process, controlled not by sentiment but by the scientific spirit of the search for objective fact. . . . The real issue in religion is not the divinity of Christ, but the Christianity of God.[36]

Modernist articles like this, so frustrated with the fundamentalist attachment to the historic Christ, were written by the score to emphasize the precedents of higher criticism, the non-divinity of Christ, and the scientific process in the search for truth.

The attacks and counterattacks by both the fundamentalists and the modernists were a constant drain on the constituencies of the mainline Protestant denominations, especially the Baptists and Presbyterians. The weakening of morale and the weariness of the controversy led to anger, hostility, and eventually to cries of heresy echoing from both sides. The charges of the modernists struck at the heart of the millenarian creed and its emphasis on the literal interpretation of Scripture. As the fundamentalists waited for God to judge the world prior to the establishment of His earthly kingdom, the liberals were busily working to initiate a godly kingdom on earth through human efforts.

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[36]"Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Christ," Christian Century 41 (17 April 1924): 496-97. Hereafter Christian Century is cited as CC.

As charges of heresy reached its peak, another Christian Century editorial condemned the fundamentalist cause:

> Who is the real heretic? . . . The atrocious heretic is he who denies *all* power to Christ, who does not believe that Christ and his faithful church cannot rid the world of war, fightings, intemperance, injustices, the slavery of women, and the vice of men, the idolatry of wealth and pleasure, and other pagan things, and set up in their stead peace, brotherhood, highmindedness and self-control, purity in thought and conduct, the love of beautiful things, the life of the Spirit. . . . The real heretic is he who does not believe in the present wonder-working God, with all power to establish the kingdom on the earth, whose one aim, so far as this world is concerned, is to establish his rule among men and who calls every Christian to unite with him in this happy exalting task.[37]

This anthropocentric emphasis as God's cure for the ills of this world churned the stomachs of the literalists who trusted only in the Christocentric answer to the world's problems. This heated public debate became a minor issue once the circus atmosphere of the Scopes trial had subsided but it was not without its effects, however, some of which directly affected the world of higher education.

Reactions in Higher Education to the Fundamentalist Controversy

For the most part, the fundamentalist controversy was limited to the annual conferences of the mainline Protestant denominations and editorial attacks in popular religious magazines. The daily routines of the denominational universities and colleges continued without much fanfare. The effect The Fundamentals had on campus was negligible. Sandeen summarizes, "There seems to be little question that the publication of this 'testimony' as Lyman Stewart called it, produced scarcely a ripple in the scholarly world and had little impact upon biblical studies and theology."[38] The only fear the community of scholars had was that fundamentalism might stymie their intellectual freedom. Speaking at the annual conference of the American Association of

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[37]"Who Are the Heretics?" CC 43 (22 April 1926): 503.

[38]Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism, 199.

University Professors in 1924, Dr. J. V. Denny, of Ohio State University, declared, "Fundamentalism if allowed its way would ruin institutions of education. . . . As a matter of sober fact, fundamentalism is the most sinister force that has yet attacked freedom of teaching."[39] Denny later bemoaned the fact that a dozen or so faculty members had been dismissed because of fundamentalist inroads into the approximately two hundred colleges and universities which existed at that time.

On a national scale, the reaction of American colleges and universities to the fundamentalist controversy seemed to be nothing more than shrugged shoulders or wrinkled brow. The fundamentalist educational leaders, however, reacted as if the liberals were stealing their heart and soul. At the inaugural World's Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA) hosted by William Bell Riley in 1929, the three speakers besides Riley were presidents of Bible institutes or training schools. James Gray (Moody), Reuben Torrey (Los Angeles, formerly of Moody), and William Pettingill (Philadelphia) preached alongside Riley, further solidifying the link between the fundamentalist controversy and the Bible college movement.

The American Bible college and training schools reacted to modernism in three ways—polemical, curricular, and organizational. In the polemic sense, faculty members at the different Bible schools constantly barraged their academic fellows in the modernist colleges, especially the denominational ones. In 1922, Dr. Wray of Taylor University reported on the atheism rampant in Methodist colleges. These institutions were chastised for wrecking the faith of young men as they studied at those institutions. Seminaries, the German university, evolution, and atheism were all considered the

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[39]"Says Fundamentalism Attacks Colleges," CC 41 (3 April 1924): 438.

source of the evil which quenched any spark of Biblical truth which might have at one time existed at these denominational institutions.[40]

In a similar vein, Dr. Hervin Roop of Wheaton College denounced in Riley's Christian Fundamentalist the major universities such as Brown, Bryn Mawr, Colgate, Rochester, Chicago and many others for allowing atheist clubs on campus. He also decried the unchecked abuse of "intellectual freedom" and its effects. Roop quoted Dr. G. B. Smith of the University of Chicago who said, "Many of the most enterprising and devoted men in or colleges deliberately turn away from the Christian ministry because they are convinced, rightly or wrongly, that there is no place in the church for the kind of free and independent thinking which they have learned at college to love and to employ constructively."[41]

In the curricular arena the Bible training school became more aggressive in stemming the tide of modernism. In the established schools, such as Riley's, two year courses were expanded to three years. As more and more seminaries graduated men with modernist views, Riley's plan for Northwestern was to not only supply the rural pulpits of Minnesota and Iowa but also the most esteemed pulpits in the cities. Coupled with this move was Moody's initiation of a pastors course. In the same Moody Bible Institute Monthly issue in which Wray attacked the Methodist colleges and another writer bemoaned the emphasis of social work in the ministry, James Gray defended the need for the extended pastoral course. Gray admitted that the decision to start the pastoral major was made over a period of six or seven years with pressure coming from both ministerial and lay leadership. The alarming number of closed churches coupled with a

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[40]Newton Wray, "The Birds in the Mustard Tree, or Atheism in Methodist Schools of Learning," Moody Bible Institute Monthly 22 (June 1922): 1059-60. Hereafter Moody Bible Institute Monthly is cited as MBIM or MM.

[41]Hervin U. Roop, "The Issue of Modernism in Colleges and Universities," Christian Fundamentalist 1 (September 1927): 6-11.

declining enrollment in seminaries were just two of the rationale. Another reason, which exemplifies the magnitude of the fundamentalist controversy, was the "alarming development of the apostasy in Christendom as predicted by the prophets of the Old and New Testaments." Gray added that a reaffirmation of faith and a multiplication of pastors was needed to counteract the pollution of philosophy and deceit found in the institutions which were the customary "educational sources of the ministry." In short, the seminaries had failed to train ministers to understand and combat the slow infiltration of modernism.[42]

Along with the written barrage against the liberal colleges and universities and the broadening of the curriculum to counter the advances of modernism, the fundamentalists sought to organize the Bible colleges into a cooperative association. Following the premise that the liberal colleges were wrecking the faith of individuals and ultimately the Protestant denominations, it was now necessary to establish a new scholarship—an orthodox scholarship. The Dean of Marion College, a Free Methodist school in Indiana, proposed an orthodox graduate school. Writing in the Moody Bible Institute Monthly, Professor Lowell Coate suggested:

> Perhaps the greatest educational need of the hour is a Christian college with sufficient independence of the world and sufficient faith in God, to ignore the whole worldly system, and to organize strong courses independent of the world's stereotyped curricula, engage the strongest conservative scholarship in America, raise the educational standard above the present unchristian philosophy, establish it upon the 'faith once for all delivered to the saints,' and then challenge the world to meet the new scholarship.[43]

Two months later, Coate acknowledged the growing number of small colleges in the Bible college movement and called instead for an association "as a matter of self-defense and self-preservation." Frustrated that in Indiana only six of the fifteen colleges were

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[42]Trollinger, 131; James M. Gray, "A Formal Step by the Moody Bible Institute," MBIM 22 (June 1922): 1063-64.

[43]Lowell H. Coate, "A New Scholarship Needed," MBIM 23 (June 1923): 472.

considered accredited, based solely on the size of the endowment, Coate recommended that the association have a standardization effect. "This association can establish its own accredited standards upon a substantial basis determined by the actual number and kind of teachers engaged, the nature and quality as well as the quantity of work done, and the excellence rather than the amount of the equipment."[44] All of these suggestions by Coate were made with the motivation to gain "victory for the cause" over modernism.

The first meeting of the Association of Conservative Protestant Colleges of America (ACPCA) was held at the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago in November, 1924. Twenty colleges from twelve denominations were represented. Issues discussed related to such topics as curricular and scholastic standards as it related to exchange of credits, textbooks free from the bent of liberalism, accreditation standards based on healthy endowments, a conservative scholarly journal, and post-graduate institutions which would be "safe" to patronize. The convention adopted a seven point statement of faith reaffirming the inerrancy of Scripture; the deity, substitutionary atonement, and resurrection of Christ; creation; and the future judgment of the earth. To the ACPCA's credit, it also adopted the scholastic standards of the regional secular accrediting agency, the North Central Association of Colleges.[45]

The chief organizers and keynote speakers of the ACPCA were primarily from colleges which would be known today as Christian liberal arts colleges. Wheaton, Taylor, Greenville, Asbury, Marion, Goshen, and Messiah were representative of those in attendance. Aside from Moody as the conference host, only Cincinnati Bible School was

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[44]Lowell H. Coate, "Further Suggestions About a New Scholarship," MBIM 23 (August 1923): 563-64.

[45]"A Convention of Orthodox Colleges," MBIM 25 (November 1924): 110; Lowell H. Coate, "Convention of Orthodox Colleges," MBIM 25 (March 1925): 318-19; C. B. Widmeyer, "Contending For the Faith," Sunday School Times 67 (1 August 1925): 481. Hereafter Sunday School Times is cited as SST.

from the ranks of the Bible training schools. This difference of mission between the Christian Protestant colleges and the Bible institutes was noted in the Sunday School Times issue which reported on the ACPCA conference. The very page following the introduction of the ACPCA and its objectives listed the forty-five "sound Bible schools" without reference to any of the ACPCA colleges.[46]

The fact that the Sunday School Times acknowledged little or no commonality in mission or purpose between the two types of schools emphasizes the fact that the fundamentalist controversy was not spirituous enough to bring these institutions together. The conservative Protestant colleges were four-year degree granting institutions seeking to stem the tide of liberalism within American higher education which, until the rise of the research university, was comprised mainly of church-related institutions. Introducing his article in the Sunday School Times, Widmeyer exclaimed, "That apostasy exists to an appalling degree in the higher educational systems of America is a fact that is apparent to any careful observer who believes God's Word, and who is foursquare for the 'faith which was once delivered unto the saints.'"[47]

The Bible school, on the other hand, continued to offer one and two-year training programs for pastors, missionaries, and Sunday School superintendents. There was little concern over the humanistic philosophies prevalent within American higher education responsible for challenging the historic roots of faith characteristic of many Protestant church-related colleges. The Bible schools and the conservative Protestant colleges shared common doctrinal distinctives but disparate educational missions. The Christian liberal arts institutions focused on working within the educational system

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[46]"Sound Bible Schools," SST 67 (1 August 1925): 482.

[47]Widmeyer, "Contending for the Faith," 481.

while the primary calling of the Bible institutes was to train laypeople for full-time ministry positions.

The American Bible college responded as the fundamentalist movement slowly boiled into a controversy. The leaders of the Bible training schools stood firm with William Bell Riley and the WCFA. The periodicals published by these institutions continually challenged the apostasy of higher criticism, and the acceptance of the evolutionary hypothesis. Two year programs were increased to three or four year courses so that pastors and other lay ministers would be better prepared to fight the battle against liberalism. The conservative Protestant colleges organized to increase academic standards and to reaffirm their beliefs in fundamentalist doctrine. The fundamentalists were digging in for a long war.

For the most part, modernists in higher education focused on their task of education and remained aloof of the controversy. Their chief concern was how fundamentalism might affect academic freedom. After the Bryan-Darrow face-off and the resulting embarrassment of the fundamentalists, most modernists sensed that fundamentalism would disappear. In 1926, the Christian Century observed:

> If we may use a biological term, fundamentalism has been a *sport*, an accidental phenomenon making its sudden appearance in our ecclesiastical order, but wholly lacking the qualities of constructive achievement or survival. Had there been no such person as William J. Bryan in American church life at that particular moment, fundamentalism as a threatening force of disruption would never have made its appearance. It has not yet fully run its fortuitous course. But it is henceforth to be a disappearing quantity in American religious life, while our churches go on to larger issues, finding their controversies in realities that are pregnant and significant for human welfare rather than in hollow and sterile dogmas which are irrelevant even if true.[48]

The final three words of this article, "even if true," were exemplary of what kept the battle brewing. As the modernists were marching victoriously off the battlefield they acknowledged the fundamentalist dogma as true but irrelevant. To the fundamentalists

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[48]"Vanishing Fundamentalism," CC 43 (24 June 1926): 799.

this admission was reason enough to keep fighting even though they found themselves without an enemy. The modernists had packed up and were headed for controversies which to them held some human significance.

As a result of this controversy, the American Bible college had undergone significant change in the few years since World War I. Gone were the days of peaceful coexistence within the mainline denominations. While the liberal groups were seeking denominational edicts to outlaw war on earth, the conservatives were looking to outlaw anyone who rejected their view of the Scriptures and Jesus Christ.

The fundamentalist *movement* which had stood for inductive Bible study, millenialism, and a zeal for the gospel of Christ had itself evolved into an aggressive *controversy* seeking to stamp out anyone or anything which did not believe as it did. It was in this atmosphere that the Bible training school proliferated. As the beast of secularism raised its ugly head, the Sunday School Times advertised for the forty-five schools which stood for the fundamentals of the faith and where young minds would be free from the pollutants of the modernists.[49] Soon these schools had become the rallying points of fundamentalism, not only by preparing students, but by publishing books, magazines, tracts, and by broadcasting fundamentalist themes across the airwaves.

Even though the Bible training schools fanned the flame of the fundamentalist controversy, one wonders if it was a conscious, intentional effort. In 1928, a speaker at Moody's annual Founder's Week conference hailed the need for such schools but made no reference to the controversy. His top four justifications for Bible institutes such as Moody were the need for an educated clergy, the number of vacant pulpits, the increased crime in the country, and the expense of training ministers at the seminaries. It was his

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[49]"Sound Bible Schools," SST 67 (1 August 1925): 482.

fifth justification for Bible training institutes—the need for doctrinal purity—which finally acknowledged the doctrinal threats modernism posed to the fundamentalists.[50]

From a curricular standpoint, the Bible institutes maintained their focus on Bible training and evangelism. Brereton's description of the classroom teaching highlights the emphasis on the critical study of the Bible and its practical use for evangelism and soul-winning. Bible course assignments centered on devotional themes, character studies, and Bible memorization. Practical courses such as "Blackboard Drawing" or methods courses which assisted the students in evangelizing members of "unorthodox" religious groups dotted the curricular landscape. Only a course such as "Introduction to the Bible," which analyzed the critical methods used to study Scripture, came close to accentuating the fundamentalist controversy.[51] Otherwise Bible institute leaders such as Gray and Riley used the increased emphasis on pastoral training to fill the empty pulpits of America and thereby indirectly counteract the rising tide of modernism.

An analysis of the Bible training schools which were founded in the 1920s, at the height of the controversy, also reflects an emphasis on training for Christian service with an occasional acknowledgment of the fundamentalist controversy. Besides providing a place for Bible conferences, the Clear Creek Baptist Bible College of Kentucky was founded in 1926 to "establish a base for a 'mountain mission program.'" L.I.F.E. Bible College of California was established as a two year institute in 1923 as "a training center to equip men and women to become evangelists, missionaries, pastors and teachers so desperately needed to bring people to Christ and to ground people's faith in God's Word." The Kentucky Christian College was founded initially as the Christian

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[50]C. R. Scafe, "The Need and Place of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago," MBIM 28 (March 1928): 323-24.

[51]Virginia Lieson Brereton, Training God's Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940 (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 87-106.

Normal Institute which ran a high school and junior college program to prepare Christian public school teachers. This was phased out in 1919 so that the education of young people for Christian service could become the central purpose. Cincinnati Bible College, on the other hand, reflected some concern for the fundamentalist controversy. The founding principle and ultimate purpose in 1924 was to provide church leaders who were well-grounded in the word of God. This was claimed by the school as especially important since during this time in history there was "a spreading infidelity toward the Word of God that was corrupting many church-sponsored institutions of higher education."[52] In spite of the growth and public acceptance of modernism, the Bible training school on the whole was busy preparing young men and women for a place of service in the local church or overseas. Rather than fight the menace of modernism as it enveloped mainline Protestantism, the central focus of the Bible college was training for effective preaching and evangelism which was true to the word of God.

As the Bible training school or Bible college moved into the thirties and forties it truly reflected the scars of the fundamentalist controversy though it did not exist expressly to fight that battle. The schools began to separate from one another over specific doctrinal issues and the fear of secularization was prevalent at many institutions. To counteract the charge of anti-intellectualism, conservative seminaries were founded as an option to the Bible training schools which, to some, offered "only elementary courses adapted to the scope of untrained minds."[53] In spite of these

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[52]Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 1992-94 College Catalog (Pineville, KY.: Clear Creek Baptist College, 192), 1; L.I.F.E. Bible College, Catalog 1992-93 (San Dimas, CA.: L.I.F.E. Bible College, 1992), 6; Kentucky Christian College, 1990-92 Catalog (Grayson, KY.: Kentucky Christian College, 1990), 3; Cincinnati Bible College, Catalog 1990-92 (Cincinnati, OH.: Cincinnati Bible College, 1990), 6-7.

[53]Letter, Lewis Sperry Chafer to C. F. W. Felt, Dallas, Texas, 4 April 1928 in "The Social and Intellectual History of the Origins of the Evangelical Theological College," John D. Hannah (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas-Dallas, 1988), 177. Lewis Sperry Chafer was the founder of what became Dallas Theological Seminary.

challenges, the American Bible college was on the verge of a period of unparalleled growth.

The Search for Direction, 1926-1945

The next twenty years was a period of redirection for both the fundamentalist movement and the Bible college. The polemics softened as the fundamentalists searched for an identity following their defeats within the denominational ranks. A period of introspection ensued.

The Retreat of Fundamentalism

Different scholars have attempted to analyze the setbacks encountered by the fundamentalists in the war with the modernists in the mid-twenties. With the advantage of only a brief hindsight, Stewart Cole wrote the earliest history of fundamentalism in 1931. Cole blamed the industrialization of America, the expansion of the scientific world view, the common school movement, World War I, and the rise of secularism as the five reasons for the demise of fundamentalism. From another perspective, however, it was self-inflicted. The major emphasis which the fundamentalists placed on the literal interpretation of Scripture led them out of the mainstream of American religion. This separatist attitude was magnified when attention was focused on the new scientific method and the rise of secularism. With the vast array of prophecy conferences and fundamentalist periodicals, and with the proliferation of fundamentalist broadcasting, Cole seems only partly correct. Along with urbanization, the public school movement, and World War I, the fundamentalists subconsciously began a theological separation which removed them further from the mainstream of American religion—far from any

possibility of theological contamination and distant from any positive effects it might have brought to the Protestant establishment.[54]

Twenty-five years later, Norman Furniss attacked this separatist attitude of the fundamentalists. In light of fundamentalism's defeat at the hands of the mainline Protestant denominations, Furniss claimed that the subsequent martyr complex was characterized by violent, almost warlike, thoughts and language and an arrogant anti-intellectualism. As if to prove Furniss correct, William Bell Riley confirmed as much in one of his initial issues of The Christian Fundamentalist:

> During comparatively recent years, Higher Criticism of the Bible, known as Rationalism or Modernism, has secured a strangle hold on the throat of practically every evangelical denomination, and seeks entire control not only of pulpits and schools, but foreign mission fields as well. Already this infidelity concerning inspiration, deity, and atonement has wrought untold harm. How to throw off this deadly grip is the problem of all orthodox men and women who love the Lord and His Word, and hold to the Fundamentals of Christianity.
>
> The Christian Fundamentals movement has arisen with no other purpose than to destroy this enemy and strengthen the faith of Christian people in the simple, fundamental truths of the Gospel.[55]

One of Riley's means in "throwing off the deadly grip" was his Bible training school. However, Furniss observed that for a fundamentalist "faith was God's only demand upon his people and that higher education was of limited value, even a handicap in seeking the Kingdom."[56] And true, some fundamentalists preached that education at the "modern college" was dangerous. Dr. Hervin Roop, a professor from Wheaton College, speaking at the ninth annual WCFA convention in 1927 stated:

> Many liberalistic professors readily admit that taking a course in a modern college has a tendency to dissuade young men from entering the ministry. Hear the words of

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[54]Stewart G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism, (Westport, CN.: Greenwood Press, 1931), 16-30.

[55]Riley, "World's Christian Fundamentalist Association," 2.

[56]Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1928-1931 (New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1954), 39.

> Professor G. B. Smith of Chicago: "Many of the most enterprising and devoted men in our colleges deliberately turn away from the Christian ministry because they are convinced, rightly or wrongly, that there is no place in the church for the kind of free and independent thinking which they have learned at college to love and to employ constructively."[57]

Though Furniss discussed at length the attitudes reflected in statements such as Roop's, he also pinned the demise of fundamentalism on such external pressures as the Depression, prohibition, the growth of knowledge, and the deficit of leadership.[58] Except for William B. Riley, there were no other fiery, charismatic, high-profile leaders willing to carry the fundamentalist torch passed by William J. Bryan at his death in 1926. In the 1880s the movers and shakers of fundamentalism worked within the denominations to promote the inerrant view of Scripture and the premillenial return of Christ. After 1926, the fundamentalist leaders had to spend all of their time and resources outside of the denomination to develop their own non-denominational networks. There was precious little time for any one person to be the national leader needed by fundamentalism at this time. In many cases with a church, a Bible training school, a radio station, and a publishing house to manage, there was no time or energy to lead a truly national movement. This lack of leadership combined with the tidal wave of secularism led to the final defeat and obsolescence of fundamentalism. A defeat in the sense that fundamentalism had removed itself from the playing field of modern American Protestantism.

One characteristic of fundamentalism's demise which greatly affected the American Bible college was the charge of anti-intellectualism. This tension continues to this day. The Bible college is primarily concerned with the integration of Scripture into all areas of education while the specialization within American higher education has led to a deep

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[57]Roop, "The Issue of Modernism in Colleges and Universities," 8.

[58]Furniss, 35-45, 178-80.

reverence for intellectual or academic freedom. Therefore any presupposition such as Scripture threatens the academic freedom which is the bulwark for the growth of knowledge and the foundation for learning. Congruently, any denial of the scientific method, the presupposition of the modernist, also placed intellectual freedom in check. Cole spoke of a "new learning in regard to the Bible, . . . a more disciplined vocabulary referring to demonstrable phenomena . . ." or an interrogation of the historic faith. Furniss later championed intellectual freedom as he completed his work:

> And so it was that fundamentalism, while easily recognizable and still a source of occasional strife in the denominations, altered its appearance after the period of its greatest activity and precipitously lost its strength. It remains today not by any means extinguished but unable to capture the headlines. The men and women who are concerned for the cause of intellectual freedom in mid-century America are aroused by other threats than those represented by the stragglers of the once potent fundamentalist movement.[59]

Furniss was happy to a proclaim that the fundamentalist threat to intellectual freedom had passed.

Cole and Furniss have explained that in the immediate years following the Scopes trial a very distinct line of demarcation existed between mainstream American higher education and that of Protestant fundamentalism. First of all, both systems recognized different basic presuppositions which at that time disallowed for any cooperation or compromise. Secondly, the fact that fundamentalism was now free from denominations allowed the movement, including the Bible institute, to strengthen its own institutional base. Thirdly, the Bible training school, in the wake of fundamentalism's defeat, did suffer an inferiority complex which actually strengthened its resolve to live with the will and hope to fight another day.[60] Fourthly, while charges of anti-intellectualism were unbalanced, the Bible training school did contract a paranoia to any support which

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[59]Cole, 330; Furniss, 181.

[60]Joel A. Carpenter, "The Renewal of American Fundamentalism, 1930-1945" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University, 1984), 33-37.

might have come from the mainstream of American higher education. Bible training school or institutes were anti-intellectual in the sense that their training was practical and not academic. In the days before accreditation, students and faculty alike met minimal educational requirements.

Free from the fundamentalist controversy, the American Bible college was in an even better situation to be the captain of its own destiny. Some schools had never operated with the denominational influence or pressure, but those loosely-related to the Baptist, Presbyterian, or Disciples were now free to build their own networks, constituencies, and even new denominations. The Bible college was also free to concentrate on its original intent and purpose--the training of young men and women as lay ministers to service the needs of the local church and foreign mission societies.

The American Bible College, 1926-1945

The cessation of the fundamentalist controversy was beneficial to both the Bible training school and the conservative Protestant colleges. These institutions were now free to strengthen their respective niches within American higher education. In addition, the average Protestant churchgoer now knew what educational perspectives were available from the denominational college or university to the fundamentalist college or institute.

In 1926, Hervin Roop, a Wheaton professor active in fundamentalist circles, surveyed conservative colleges and Bible training schools asking them to affirm the nine point confession of faith adopted by Riley's World's Christian Fundamentals Association. By September 1927, over 104 institutions of all types had responded positively to the inquiry. In 1930, the Sunday School Times listed forty-four interdenominational American Bible training schools which were "true to the faith," by "standing for the whole Word of God." Even taking overlap into account, there were easily 125 fundamentalist Christian liberal arts and Bible training schools. In the next two decades

thirty-six Bible colleges began so that, by 1950, 50 percent of the current seventy-nine fully accredited American Bible colleges in the American Association of Bible Colleges had been founded.[61] In the aftermath of the fundamentalist controversy, it is evident that the fundamentalists "shook the dust off their feet" and removed themselves from mainline Protestantism in order to build and strengthen their own base of operations of which Bible colleges were a part. Two such institutions were North Central Bible Institute and Lincoln Bible Institute.

North Central Bible Institute and the Assemblies of God. North Central Bible Institute was another in the long line of Bible training schools founded by a fervent gospel pioneer. Frank J. Lindquist was born in 1898 near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania into a predominately Swedish community. The Evangelical Free Church was the Lindquist family's church of choice, but at the age of sixteen young Lindquist attended a Pentecostal revival where he and later, his family, were saved and baptized in the Spirit.

Lindquist was influenced heavily by the itinerant Pentecostal evangelists. By the age of twenty-two, after working in the steel mills of Pittsburgh, he joined an evangelist for a tent meeting in Gary, Indiana. By 1924, he was the pastor of the Minneapolis Gospel Tabernacle. Two years later, Lindquist was preaching throughout Minnesota and was instrumental in forming the North Central District of the Assemblies of God.[62]

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[61]Hervin U. Roop, "Schools That Stand for the Christian Fundamentals," Christian Fundamentalist 1 (September 1927): 15-16. William & Mary, Emory, and Furman are examples of colleges which affirmed WCFA's nine points of faith and without argument would today be considered distantly church-related. "Bible Schools That Are True to the Faith," SST 72 (1 February 1930): 63; Directory, 1991-1992, American Association of Bible Colleges, Fayetteville, AR.

[62]Glenn Gohr, "A Harvest in Minnesota: The Story of A/G Pioneer Frank J. Lindquist," A/G Heritage (Spring 1990): 10-13; Frank J. Lindquist, "Biography of Our President," in The Archive of 1933, 5-6. The Archive was the first yearbook/catalog of North Central Bible Institute in which Dr. Lindquist wrote a brief

The Assemblies of God as a denomination had only been organized in 1914 and was a result of the Pentecostal movement spawned by Charles Fox Parham in 1901 at Topeka, Kansas. The three year Azusa Street revival in downtown Los Angeles from 1906 to 1909 had launched Pentecostalism onto the worldwide scene. "Basically Pentecostals believe that the experience of the 120 on the day of Pentecost, known as the 'baptism in the Holy Spirit,' should be normative for all Christians. Most Pentecostals believe, furthermore, that the first sign of 'initial evidence' of this second baptism is speaking in a language unknown to the speaker."[63] This is commonly referred to as "speaking in tongues" and is a characteristic of the worldwide charismatic movement.

As an infant denomination at the height of the fundamentalist controversy, it is only natural that in its formative years it would reflect some concerns of the fundamentalists. Though ostracized in many regions due to the charismatic emphasis, the Assembly of God churches held to the basic "fundamentals of the faith." Therefore, it is not surprising that as a denomination it would be ambivalent about higher education. The three reasons given by L. F. Wilson for this ambivalence seems to reflect the fundamentalist movement as a whole. First there was the fear that higher education would destroy faith. Then followed the doctrinal motivation that, with the imminent return of Jesus Christ, there was no need to spend years in higher education. And lastly, the educational level of most of the Assembly of God parishioners made any educational preparation by the minister unnecessary.[64] In the early years of the denomination nearly all of the leaders lacked

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autobiography.

[63]Vinson Synan, "Pentecostalism," in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 836.

[64]L. F. Wilson, "Bible Institutes, Colleges, Universities," in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, eds. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 57-58.

formal theological training, as evidenced by the fact that Frank Lindquist did higher education coursework by correspondence.

Frank Lindquist and the Assemblies of God attribute the beginnings of North Central Bible Institute to the summer camp meetings sponsored by the denomination. The camp meeting was an informal means by which the denomination educated its constituency. The camp meeting was not new to American religion, especially to its more charismatic element, and it proved to be very similar to the prophecy conferences which had begun forty years earlier. The purposes of the two meetings proved to be the same—to gather believers together to study the Bible and to strengthen their spiritual lives.

In June 1921, the North Central District of the Assemblies of God hosted its first annual camp meeting at Lake Geneva in Alexandria, Minnesota. Living in tents and cottages, faithful church members came to hear nationally recognized evangelists and Bible teachers. By 1929, one thousand campers enjoyed the two weeks of meetings which also boasted an orchestra of fifty musicians. The camp meeting of 1929 was followed by an eight week Bible school "especially for preachers and Christian workers with instruction by able teachers." This was just the impetus needed to get North Central Bible Institute started the following fall.[65]

It was with this camp meeting momentum that Frank Lindquist christened North Central Bible Institute. Earlier in his ministry the general council of the denomination had met and had formed a Bible school commission known as the Executive Presbytery and charged it with the oversight of the existing Bible colleges within the Assemblies of God. The purpose was to standardize the training and to make the new Central Bible Institute of Springfield, Missouri, the flagship of the Assembly schools. Five years later, the North Central District, headed by Lindquist, resolved within its constitution

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[65]Lake Geneva Camp Meeting brochure, 1929, Archives, T. J. Jones Memorial Library, North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, MN.

"to do all in its power to establish schools for training of candidates for the ministry, and shall cooperate with the General Council in such matters." With the Lake Geneva camp meetings as the springboard, North Central Bible Institute began operation in Lindquist's church in the fall of 1930. By 1933, North Central boasted 115 students, eight teachers, and a graduating class of eight men and eleven women.[66]

North Central Bible Institute was off and running. It was established "to promote a thorough knowledge of the Word of God, in order that lives of those who enter may be conformed to Bible standards and governed by a supreme devotion to the interests God's Kingdom." Prospective students were encouraged to attend North Central whether they realized a special call to the ministry or not, especially if they felt the need for further Bible study. This approach was not as narrow as that of some of the earlier Bible training schools which attempted to train young men and women for specific ministry skills. It also signaled the future debates within the Assemblies of God over the objectives of their member schools. In the forties and fifties, committee upon committee reported to the general council their findings as to a Bible institute education as opposed to a denominationally sponsored liberal arts education for the college-aged member of the Assemblies of God.[67] This denominational flavor within the Bible college movement brought new logistical and philosophical concerns which were foreign to most other Bible colleges. The Church of Christ was another denomination which had several Bible institutes starting during the same years as the Assemblies of God schools.

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[66]Edith L. Blumhofer, The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism, vol. 1 (Springfield, MO.: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 319; "Constitution and By-laws of the North Central District Council of the Assemblies of God," 1928, Archives, T. J. Jones Memorial Library, North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, MN.; The Archive of 1933, 6.

[67]The Archive of 1933, 7; Edith L. Blumhofer, The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Protestantism, vol. 2, (Springfield, MO.: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 109-32.

Lincoln Bible Institute and the Christian Restoration Association. While the Assemblies of God denomination struggled with the philosophy and objectives of its institutions, the member churches of the Christian Restoration Association used the 1920s to focus all their efforts on restoring the local church to the New Testament model. Those involved in this restoration movement made it very clear that they were not a part of any denomination. As the Disciples of Christ endured the fundamentalist controversy, this leading Protestant denomination also spawned these divergent, more conservative branch of churches.

From its beginnings in the early 1800s, what eventually became known as the Disciples of Christ was formed as a loosely knit group of churches seeking to restore to the world the unity of the church by discipling all people and baptizing by immersion all Christians in the name of the Trinity. This mission was based upon "the concept of the literal Bible as the authority revealing the true doctrines and customs to which the faithful must return." It was with little surprise that as the modernists began to substitute the values of the modernist, the historical tenets of the "denomination" were challenged.[68]

The challenge came in the area of church membership. The higher critics at the University of Chicago, some of whom were Disciples, had laid the groundwork for an open membership plan for members in the Disciples who had not been immersed. This was in direct contradiction to the historical purpose of the church which was held by the fundamentalist wing of the Disciples. One of the battlegrounds between the conservatives and modernists became one of the colleges supported by the Disciples—Transylvania College.[69] Professors had been added to the Transylvania faculty who were sympathetic

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[68]Cole, 132; Furniss, 170-71.

[69]Early in their history the Disciples of Christ founded colleges throughout the Midwest including Drake, Hiram, Eureka, Butler, Canton, and Transylvania.

to the progressive teaching coming from the Disciple Divinity House at the University of Chicago. Attempts were made to challenge the faculty of liberal persuasion but since the Disciples were more of an association than a strong denomination there was little recourse for the fundamentalists.

A strong response came in the form of the Christian Restoration Association. Its distinctive was "to exalt the local church as the fullest flower of the Kingdom of God on earth, free and untrammeled by any agency of man's making." The new association sanctioned its own institutions to testify to orthodox biblicism. The conservative leaders sensed that the restoration movement was "suffering at this time for the lack of an on-coming generation of leadership loyal to the New Testament Scriptures, on fire with evangelism and committed to the task of restoring the New Testament Church to the world." Upon its organization, the Christian Restoration Association supervised the Cincinnati Bible School, Christian Normal Institute of Kentucky, Christian Bible College of Colorado, Eugene Bible University of Oregon, Minnesota Bible College, and the two schools founded by T. W. Phillips—a university in Oklahoma and a Bible institute in Ohio.[70]

It was within this context that Lincoln Bible Institute of Lincoln, Illinois, was founded. The group of ministers who organized the institute in 1944 were committed to the principles of the Christian Restoration Association. The original constitution and by-laws of Lincoln emphasized "the plea for the unity of God's people through the restoration of the New Testament church. . . ." It also described the church as "undenominational." The purpose of Lincoln Bible Institute was "to train preachers who will know the Christ and be able to preach Christ to this generation. . . ."[71]

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[70]Cole, 147, 158-60.

[71]Lincoln Christian College, 1991-92 Catalog (Lincoln, IL.: Lincoln Christian College, 1991), 9; Lincoln Bible Institute, 1944-45 Catalog (Lincoln, IL.: Lincoln

Generally speaking, the Lincoln Bible Institute was founded as a reaction to the liberalism which had come to dominate the historic Disciples' movement, especially the institutions of higher learning. More specifically, it was organized to fill the void of leadership within the restoration churches throughout Illinois. The sensitivity to the Transylvania incident can be seen in Lincoln Bible Institute's defense of an articulation agreement with Lincoln College, the neighboring two year liberal arts college. Although renting quarters in Lincoln College in its inaugural year, the leadership of the Bible institute went to great lengths to assure its constituency that there would be no entanglement with a secular institution. In the first Lincoln Bible Institute catalog it stated, "We will in no way be linked to Lincoln College. . . . We merely buy from them the services and the equipment they have to offer."[72] Before the year was out, there was no room for any suspicions that the secularism of Lincoln College would infiltrate the institute as the seventy full or part-time students moved to what was formerly the Lincoln Business College. The establishment of Lincoln Bible College was very exemplary of the many non-denominational institutions founded in the decades following the fundamentalist controversy.

North Central Bible Institute (1930) and Lincoln Bible Institute (1944) were two examples of the approximately forty Bible training schools founded in the thirties and the forties. While most of the schools were free from denominational control, North Central reflected the emphasis in the Assemblies of God to train and educate their own youth. At the denominational level, the issue of Bible training schools versus Christian liberal arts colleges was discussed at length. Lincoln and its sister restoration schools continued to emphasize the non-denominational aspect of their ventures. When an institution was free from the denominational expectation of teaching, nurturing, and

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Bible Institute, 1944), 1.

[72]Ibid., 5.

reproducing the next generation of leaders, as was the case at Lincoln in contrast to North Central, it was more free to simply train students in skills for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Lincoln, then, was not pressured in its early days to formulate a thorough philosophy of general education as it related to a holistic view of education.

The majority of the Bible colleges founded in the thirties and the forties, much like Lincoln and North Central, met the needs of a specific constituency in a specific region of the country. Each institution was very independent but also withdrawn from society as it suffered the repercussions of the fundamentalist controversy. However, by the late 1940s, the many and varied ministries within fundamentalism were beginning to reorganize and pool their efforts as they faced the secular challenges of the second half of the twentieth century.

Cooperation Without Compromise, 1945-1995

The close of World War II was the catalyst to the great expansion of American higher education which lasted well into the 1970s. Hundreds and thousands of military service personnel returned home and entered the collegiate ranks. As for the Bible college movement, forty institutions opened in the post-war years, with fifteen starting between 1945 and 1950. No fully accredited Bible college within the American Association of Bible Colleges has been established since 1976, so the buzz of Bible college activity from 1945 to 1970 was quite reflective of the entire scene of American higher education.

This proliferation of Bible colleges would not have been possible if the fundamentalist movement had not reorganized itself as it searched for direction following the Scopes trial and the untimely death of William J. Bryan. While some scholars considered the fundamentalist movement dead, there is evidence that the movement continued its growth. Even though it took time, the fundamentalists shifted their efforts

from denominational concerns to focus their attention on activities that would strengthen the movement from an interdenominational standpoint.

The fundamentalists used the rhetoric of martyrdom or outsiderness to describe their condition and shape their sense of identity.[73] The "outsider consciousness" which developed among the fundamentalists provided a stability which was essential to preserving the distinctives of the movement. Such rhetoric was disseminated throughout fundamentalism via the expanding number of summer conferences, radio broadcasts, foreign missions, and of course the educational institutions. The February 1947 issue of Christian Life and Times highlighted in one issue alone such parachurch organizations that related to advertising, Gospel recordings, and Christian television.[74] While the fundamentalists faced the loss of respect from the intellectual elites, both within the liberal mainline denominations and colleges and seminaries, the fundamentalists did not necessarily lose popular support.

By the 1940s, the fundamentalists started once again to discuss ways of organizing and pooling their efforts to counteract the modernist impulse which was continuing to grow within the Protestant mainline denominations and the American society as a whole.[75] It would not be easy, however, as the fundamentalists found themselves divided into two camps—the separatists and the non-separatists.

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[73] R. Laurence Moore, "The Protestant Majority as a Lost Generation—A Look at Fundamentalism," chap. in Religious Outsiders and the Making of America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 150-72.

[74]"Significant News for Christians," Christian Life and Times, February 1947, 28-33.

[75]Carpenter, 1-35.

The Issue of Separation

Following the Scopes trial, most fundamentalists abandoned their denominations and established loosely-structured associations. For example, the Baptists who defected from the liberal American Baptist denomination started such groups as the Conservative Baptist Association, the General Association of Regular Baptists, or the Independent Fundamental Churches of America. Offspring were also propagated from the Northern Presbyterian Church and the Disciples of Christ. The question which every fundamentalist church member had to answer was the extent to which he or she still associated with the former denomination. Some members remained very sympathetic to the practices and creeds of their former denomination but withdrew on doctrinal grounds. Others, unfortunately, were very angry that their denomination of many generations had "sold its soul" to liberalism and that they had no choice but to leave and to leave fighting. By the late 1940s, these separatists, who would have no association with their mainline Protestant denomination whatsoever, began to exhibit very militant behavior. Furniss correctly described these militant fundamentalists as violent, ignorant, and egotistical.[76]

A word which was in popular use prior to the fundamentalist/modernist controversy was the word "evangelical." This term was resurrected by the non-separatists to correctly portray their attitudes and philosophy toward the mainline denominations in contrast to the militant fundamentalists. The term "evangelical" was very fitting, for prior to the publication of The Fundamentals, it correctly described one who believed in the inspired Word of God, a literal interpretation of Scripture, and the historical Jesus. The non-separatists now called themselves "evangelicals" not only to separate themselves from the militant fundamentalists but also to emphasize their

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[76]Furniss, 35-45. Furniss intended his description of fundamentalists to be all encompassing when in actuality it described the most militant groups.

historic conservative theological roots. In making this full circle back to the evangelical days of Moody and Gordon, battle lines were drawn for an evangelical/fundamentalist debate. For many fundamentalists the new enemy was the evangelicals who, on occasion, would support people and programs affiliated with the mainline Protestant denominations. This struggle was amplified in the national organizations which developed.

The separatists versus the non-separatists. In 1941, within a month of each other, two fundamentalist organizations were born with the thought that each would promote a united defense against the continual attacks made on fundamentalism by the liberal churches and their national organization, the Federal Council of Churches. In September, the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC), was organized by Carl McIntire, a minister in the fundamentalist Bible Presbyterian Synod, to counteract the influential voice the Federal Council of Churches had in Washington, DC, especially as it related to religious radio programming. McIntire's group reflected the true colors of the fundamentalist controversy. The ACCC was pro-gospel and militantly anti-modernist and would not affiliate nor allow any of its members to affiliate with member churches or groups in the Federal Council. The ACCC was an organization which not only separated from the Federal Council but also from any other fundamentalist organization which chose to align itself with members of the Federal Council. Though it was established to preserve the testimony of historic fundamentalism, this separatist organization reflected only a reactionary, negative, and destructive faith which is typical of the militant fundamentalists today.[77]

A month after the ACCC was formed, a group of non-separatist fundamentalists met at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago to lay the groundwork for what was to become the

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[77]Gasper, 23-25.

National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). Organized by pastors, foreign mission leaders, and administrators of leading Christian liberal arts colleges, the NAE was "determined to shun all forms of bigotry, intolerance, misrepresentation, hate, jealousy, false judgment, and hypocrisy." In other words, the NAE would not reflect the militant attitudes of the ACCC and would not require its membership to separate from the Federal Council of Churches. The NAE believed that inclusivity would be more beneficial to the revivalistic desires of fundamentalism than the militant separatism of the ACCC.[78]

It comes as no surprise, then, that many interdenominational parachurch agencies began to flourish under the mandate of the NAE. Youth for Christ, Young Life, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, and later, Campus Crusade for Christ, all experienced birth pangs as they presented a positive evangelistic message across denominational boundaries. The members of the NAE, while fundamentalists in their message and doctrine, did not reflect the militant separatist lifestyle of the ACCC. By 1947, the NAE represented thirty denominations totaling 1.3 million members and a decade later it boasted a membership of forty denominations with two million members.[79]

The one individual who personified the evangelical movement was Billy Graham. A youth evangelist in the early days of Youth for Christ, Graham began holding great evangelistic meetings similar to D. L. Moody's of a century earlier. Having been hand-picked by William Bell Riley to be the next president of the Northwestern schools in Minneapolis, Graham had deep roots in the fundamentalist movement. Sadly for the movement as a whole, the militants rejected the ministry of Billy Graham because, in

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[78]Carpenter, 1984; James Deforest Murch, Cooperation Without Compromise: A History of the National Association of Evangelicals (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 51; Gasper, 25-31.

[79]Murch, 196, 202-3.

many cases, he coordinated his regional crusades with members of the Federal Council of Churches. Acceptance of the methodology and philosophy of ministry espoused by Graham became the litmus test of evangelicalism. Graham had rejected the militancy of Riley for the constructive fundamentalism of the NAE.

The feud which developed between the NAE and the ACCC over Graham also affected the Bible college movement. The acceptance or rejection of Billy Graham's ministry became the test as to which side of the fundamentalist fence a specific Bible college might reside. Most colleges sought neutrality by catering to both the evangelicals and the militant fundamentalists. There were a handful of fundamentalist colleges, however, which took pride in their militancy, especially the largest one—Bob Jones University. In 1947, Bob Jones had relocated to Greenville, South Carolina, and inhabited a newly built physical structure valued at four million dollars with an impressively large student population of twenty-five hundred.[80] It became the model for other separatist colleges, one of which was the Pillsbury Baptist Bible College of Owatonna, Minnesota.

Richard V. Clearwaters and Pillsbury Baptist Bible College. Besides representing the separatist Baptists of the Minnesota Baptist Convention, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College was unique because it was one of only two land grant colleges in Minnesota, the other being the University of Minnesota. Incorporated by an act of the Minnesota Territorial legislature in 1854, Pillsbury was initially known as Minnesota Central University but was tied to the Baptist denomination by virtue of the fact that the articles of incorporation required a certain percentage of trustees to be Minnesota Baptists. Reflecting the educational landscape of that era, it opened as a secondary-level academy.

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[80]John G. Garth, "A Modern Miracle in Christian Education," United Evangelical Action (1 July 1947): 7-8. Hereafter United Evangelical Action is cited as UEA. "Bob Jones Enrolls 2,500 Students," UEA (15 October 1947): 7.

By 1876, when the Chicago Bible Institute was merely a dream of Moody's, the Minnesota Academy was ready for full operation in Owatonna. Up to that time, in an effort to weather extreme financial difficulties, Minnesota Central University had bounced from Baptist church to Baptist church and small town to small town in an attempt to survive. In 1883, Charles A. Pillsbury, the great flour mogul and an active Baptist, began his frequent donations to the academy, so that by 1886 it was known as Pillsbury Academy. Upon his death, Pillsbury left $250,000 to the endowment fund of the academy. A young firebrand of a fundamentalist named William Bell Riley performed the funeral service.[81] By the turn of the century, there were close to two hundred students enrolled at the academy but that number would soon dwindle as a result of competition from state-supported public high schools. From 1920 until 1957, the Pillsbury Academy became a military school for boys with occasional thoughts of making it a junior college. After a long court struggle, Pillsbury Academy became the Pillsbury Baptist Bible College in 1957.

The fireworks which led to the academy becoming the Baptist College began in the 1940s. A small scale version of the fundamentalist/modernist battles of the twenties erupted in Minnesota. Led by William Bell Riley and a young colleague by the name of Richard V. Clearwaters, the fundamentalists sought to maintain control of the Minnesota Baptist Convention and by association the academy in Owatonna as well. Minnesota was one of the few states, if not the only state, whose Baptist convention as a member of the American Baptist denomination was controlled by the militant fundamentalists. Upon Riley's death, Clearwaters carried the fundamentalist flag describing himself as a "militant Biblicist."

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[81]Richard V. Clearwaters, On the Upward Road: An Autobiography (Maple Grove, MN.: Nystrom Publishing, n.d.), 71-76; Larry D. Pettegrew, The History of Pillsbury Baptist Bible College (Owatonna, MN.: Pillsbury Press, 1981), 27.

Lacking a high school education, Clearwaters defied the liberal stereotype of a fundamentalist by completing all but the dissertation towards a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. His funds had run short when it was time to study overseas. In 1922 he had entered the Moody Bible Institute, after which he obtained two bachelor's degrees, the B.Div. and Th.B., from the Northern Baptist Seminary. Clearwaters proved so studious that he completed his B.A. from Kalamazoo College in two years while earning a scholarship to the University of Chicago. From Chicago he received his M.A. in Greek New Testament literature in 1931. In writing of his experience at Chicago and Kalamazoo, both historically Baptist colleges, Clearwaters said:

> I want you to know that fundamentalists could never be half as dogmatic as modernists—not half as prejudiced. When one is prejudiced against the Word of God, this Book says that God sends them strong delusions that they believe a lie. And this makes them more adamant, more absolutely egotistical, more unbending than any fundamentalist ever dared to be.[82]

Clearwaters was frustrated that as a fundamentalist he was treated as an academic inferior and that the bastions of "untrammeled thought" encouraged this mentality. It was this experience at Kalamazoo and Chicago which made him the self-proclaimed "militant Biblicist."

It was this Clearwaters who led the Minnesota Baptist Convention against the liberal national denomination for control of Pillsbury Academy. In 1955, the Minnesota Supreme Court decided in favor of Clearwaters and the fundamentalists by upholding legislative decisions in the 1870s which had confirmed the state Baptist organization as the agency which controlled Pillsbury. In August 1957, the former military academy opened its doors as the Pillsbury Baptist Bible College with Clearwaters as the first president. He also maintained his pastorate of the Fourth Baptist Church of Minneapolis as well as the presidency of the Central Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary.

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[82]Pettegrew, 116.

Within months of the Bible college having opened, Clearwaters hired his first president for Pillsbury, Dr. Monroe Parker from Bob Jones University.

The Pillsbury Baptist Bible College was founded because of the deep concern that the evangelicals and their schools were moving away from the Biblical standards of morality and the historic fundamentals of Scripture. In the 1920s, many Bible training schools had been established as an option to the modernistic church-related institutions. Likewise, in the fifties and sixties, colleges such as Pillsbury were started as a reaction to evangelicalism or the "general apathy in Christian colleges toward unbelief as expressed in such activities as the ecumenical movement, new evangelicalism, and ecumenical evangelism."[83]

Because of this separatist philosophy, these colleges and many other American Bible colleges eschewed any form of standardization or accreditation from governmental or secular agencies, confirming the credibility gap between the fundamentalist institutions and the mainstream of American higher education. By the mid-1940s, however, attempts were being made to rectify the situation.

American Association of Bible Colleges

A brief news item in the 15 October 1947, United Evangelical Action announced a meeting of evangelical educators to organize some type of accrediting association for Bible institutes and colleges. Part of the impetus for this meeting came from the National Association of Evangelicals and the other from concerned Bible college administrators.[84]

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[83] Clearwater Christian College, College Catalog, 1990-91 (Clearwater, FL.: Clearwater Christian College, 1990), 10; The American Association of Christian Colleges and Seminaries directory of 1992 lists seventeen institutions which represent current fundamentalism.

[84]"Educators Planning New Standardization," UEA (15 October 1947): 7.

Dr. James Gray of the Moody Bible Institute had initially called for a gathering of leaders to standardize courses of training as early as 1918 during a Founder's Day Conference. Due to irreconcilable differences in curriculum, methods, and key doctrines, the whole effort was dropped. Twenty-four years later, in 1942, Dr. Ferrin of Providence Bible Institute also discouraged such an idea:

> In discussion with our faculty today, the opinion of the members is that, while we shall welcome any fellowship of Bible institutes for mutual help and development, we are not in sympathy with the standardization of the curriculum. . . . While standardization has its advantages, it also has its disadvantages, and among them is the controlling of the institution so that free enterprise is ofttimes curtailed.[85]

In Ferrin's mind, the chief obstacle to an accreditation association was the fear of the loss of institutional autonomy.

Five years later, Ferrin had changed his thinking. In January 1947, a small group of twelve administrators representing eight institutions gathered to discuss the feasibility of establishing an accrediting association. Representatives from key institutions such as the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA), Fort Wayne Bible College, Providence Bible Institute, Philadelphia School of the Bible, and Moody Bible Institute discussed issues ranging from student life, faculty and staff salaries, retirement and pensions, governance issues, and doctrinal concerns. Further discussions covered curriculum, faculty qualifications, and library resources. Before the meetings had adjourned, a framework was in place for the first meeting of the Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges (AABIBC).[86]

The goal of the October 1947, "Constitutional" meeting was "to establish an accrediting agency according to sound collegiate standards but which will be predicated on principles of Bible college education." Forty-six delegates, representing fifty

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[85]John Mostert, The AABC Story: Forty Years with the American Association of Bible Colleges, (Fayetteville, AR.: Lakeside Press, 1986) 15.

[86]Ibid., 23-32.

institutions and 13,907 day and evening students, gathered to approve the constitution and by-laws. A dual purpose of the AABIBC was defined in Article II of the constitution:

> Section 1. To bring into cooperative association Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges whose objectives are similar and who are conservative and evangelical in doctrine.
>
> Section 2. To define, evaluate, establish and maintain general academic standards; to institute, maintain and publish a list of those schools accredited according to the standards set by the Association, and to develop and foster such procedures as will facilitate inter-change of student credits; and strengthen the position of students undertaking additional work in other schools.[87]

This dual purpose was accepted by the delegates and has been the basic rubric upon which decisions have been made regarding Bible colleges for the last forty-five years.

The formation in 1947 of what is now the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges brings to an end the discussion of the history of the Bible college movement, prior to its days of being an organized association. From the 1880s to the late 1940s, hundreds of Bible training schools had come and gone, some with very short life spans. These Bible training schools did not simply germinate upon a vacant terrace of American religious history. Some were established as a response to the spiritual and physical needs of the urban poor, others were a direct reaction to the fundamentalist/modernist controversy, while others sought to service new, more fundamental, and less liberal denominations.

The American Bible college movement was initiated in the 1870s as the training site for devout men and women seeking to serve needy men, women, and children in the burgeoning urban centers of the industrial North. These city missionaries, Sunday School teachers, YMCA or YWCA workers, and social workers were trained at such schools as Nyack (NY), Moody (IL), and God's Bible School (OH) to be vocational support staff to churches within American Protestantism. By the turn of the century, social

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[87]S. A. Witmer, Education With Dimension, (Manhasset, NY.: Channel Press 1962), 45-46; Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges, "Constitution and By-Laws of the Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges" (Ft. Wayne, IN.: Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges, 1947).

Darwinism began to erode the biblical presuppositions of many seminaries and divinity schools. As a result some local congregations eschewed the graduates of these lofty institutions in favor of the men and women trained at the Bible training institutes where Scripture was studied in depth from a literal perspective.

This growing antipathy towards established Protestant denominations, together with the publishing of The Fundamentals, set the stage for the fundamentalist controversy which reached its zenith in the 1920s. The mainline Protestant denominations won this major doctrinal dispute which culminated in the Scopes trial. With the subsequent death of fundamentalism's major spokesman, William Jennings Bryan, the conservative elements of American Protestantism began to break away from their parent denominations and formed not only their own churches, periodicals, conference centers, and radio programs, but their own training schools as well. Riley's Northwestern schools were alternatives to the other American Baptist colleges and Cincinnati Bible Institute became an option to the established colleges within the Disciples of Christ. The fledgling Assembly of God denomination established Bible training schools to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" as well as train clergy and church staff. Older Bible training schools such as Moody initiated pastoral majors for fear that seminary graduates no longer revered nor preached the literal word of God.

In the 1940s, the fundamentalist movement organized itself apart from the mainline denominations by founding specific professional organizations. The interdenominational National Association of Evangelicals, National Religious Broadcasters, and Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges were conceived at this time. The Bible training schools which had evolved into Bible institutes, and in some cases degree-granting colleges, founded the AABC with the goal of standardizing courses, faculty pay, library quotas, and admission requirements, just to name a few. The AABC was important not only from the standpoint of recognized accreditation, but as a support

base for the many Bible institutes and colleges across the United States with no denominational ties.

With the organized Bible college movement on the doorstep of its fiftieth anniversary in 1997 and with several colleges having already celebrated their centennial birthdays, the American Bible college is on the brink of joining the mainstream of American higher education. Many Bible colleges have already wrestled with regional accreditation and the difficulties of integrating general education courses into a concentrated Bible and ministry program. The fear of secularization has arisen as some have left the fold over the last decade. To chart a course for the future, however, requires not only a study of the past but also an analysis of the present. It should be no surprise, then, with the rapid changes taking place on the landscape of American higher education, that institutional mission is the most pivotal discussion on Bible college campuses today.

CHAPTER 3

THE CRISIS OF MISSION

Late in 1993, the trustees of the University of Puget Sound voted to transfer its law school to a neighboring institution, Seattle University. While the board endured extensive criticism, it remained firm in its belief that transferring the law school "would clarify Puget Sound's mission as a national liberal-arts college." Puget Sound also believed that the law school "would be better served by becoming part of an institution firmly committed to professional and graduate education."[1] This transaction would have never taken place if the trustees and administration of the University of Puget Sound were confused as to the mission of their university. Instead, difficult decisions involving thousands of dollars and hundreds of faculty and staff were made on the basis of a very specific mission statement. Such focus was once a defining characteristic of the Bible college.

In the early years of the Bible college movement, the Bible college delineated itself from other forms of higher education in two ways—theologically and educationally. In light of the Scopes trial and the subsequent relegation of fundamentalism to secondary status in Protestant circles, the educational purpose of the Bible college was to prepare young men and women to serve full-time in the ranks of the local church and parachurch organizations. This training effort included hands-on skills as well as in-depth biblical and theological studies. With a renewed emphasis on the scriptures, the Bible college

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[1]Susan Resneck Pierce, "A College Must Be Clear About Its Mission," Chronicle of Higher Education, 6 April 1994, A64.

had positioned itself at odds with other theological entities in higher education. The doctrinal and educational differences were so distinct that the Bible college was rarely confused with a rapidly secularizing Protestant liberal arts college or a seminary compromising its stance on the literal message of the scriptures. The mission of the Bible college was well-defined and strategically-owned as the movement prepared for the middle years of the twentieth century.[2]

However, the last quarter of the 1900s presented new challenges to the Bible college. With the demise of fundamentalism, the barometer of definition disappeared. The massive influx and instant cash flow of federal grants and loans, as well as the larger pool of qualified students, made the Bible college an easy target for expanding programs. Discussions of regional accreditation and general education within the curriculum placed Bible colleges in the shallows if not the mainstream of higher education. In most cases the theological distinctives were as strong as ever, but the vocational emphasis on church ministries began to be compromised. What was once a movement quite disparate from the norm of higher education reconfigured itself to allow for a greater breadth of mission and purpose. This period of expansion created a crisis of mission which necessitated a search for a new identity.

A better understanding of this mission crisis requires an analysis of the past. In this chapter, the historical mission of the American Bible college is noted followed by a study of specific Bible colleges and their progressive development of mission. Current trends within the movement are also analyzed so that a better perception of the identity crisis might assist the Bible college in establishing a clearer mission statement—one truer to its historical intent and purpose.

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[2]For a detailed study of the early Bible training school see Brereton, Training God's Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940, Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1990.

An Historical Analysis of the Bible College Mission

A chronological glance at the evolving mission of the Bible college is quite illuminating. For one hundred years, the Bible college defined itself by its reaction to society rather than its unique distinctives. The founding fathers likened themselves similar to, but quite unlike, the seminaries at the turn of the century. As some of the mainline denominations failed to meet the needs and demands of some of their congregations, the Bible college graduate was able to fill such a void. Later, this decline of the mainline denominations coupled with the fact that the Bible college movement was fashioned outside the religious establishment required an organization to which Bible colleges would be accountable. By the late forties, the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) became the defining element of the movement as it wrestled with quality control, academic excellence, and ministry preparation. The quarterly Newsletter of the AABC described other struggles of the Bible college movement such as the reaction to the secular culture of the seventies and the declining enrollments of the eighties. Market pressures led to a redefinition of mission and in some cases a philosophical blending of the Bible college and the Christian liberal arts college. At each interval of the timeline, the Bible college was faced with a crisis of definition.

In 1995, the mission of the Bible college is characterized by transition. The following section traces the mission of the Bible college as a movement from its early days to its current crisis of identity. This background will prove helpful as snapshots of specific institutions are studied later and the contemporary tensions confronting Bible colleges are observed.

The Mission of the Early Bible College, 1900-1950

The formation of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges in 1947 made the task of defining a Bible college much easier. However, prior to that time the Bible

college was defined mostly by the fact that it was not a standard four-year liberal arts institution but rather a two- or three-year vocational training school for Christian service. From the earliest days of Nyack Missionary Training School (1882) and Moody Bible Institute (1886), the Bible training school was forced to answer charges that it was replacing seminary training. Dwight L. Moody claimed that the training of "gap men" did not conflict with the role of the seminary. A. J. Gordon faced the same accusation as New England Baptists charged him with using a "short-cut" method to ministerial training at his Boston Missionary Training School. In both cases the evangelistic fervor of each man overshadowed any conscious effort to undermine the role of the seminary.

In the early catalogs of the 1900s, Moody Bible Institute (MBI) published a fairly extensive statement as to the general object of the institution as well as a section entitled "For Whom Intended." It was in these two explanatory sections that MBI attempted to contrast itself to the seminaries. The statement of objective is condensed to one sentence in the 1911 catalog and it reads, "The object of the school, stated in general terms, is to train men and women in the knowledge of the English Bible, Gospel music, personal evangelism and practical methods of Christian work, emphasis being laid upon the developing and deepening of the spiritual life." Following close on the heels of this purpose statement is one regarding the training for the pastorate:

> From the above it will be seen that while the Institute does not profess to train its students for the pastorate, yet a number enter upon that exalted service—sometimes after further study in college or seminary, and sometimes where a knowledge of the Bible and practical methods of Christian work is regarded as more necessary than merely scholastic ability.[3]

Moody Bible Institute was beginning to set itself above and apart from the seminaries by requiring practical service to society in addition to the academic content.

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[3]Moody Bible Institute, Moody Bible Institute Bulletin, 1911 (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1911), 15-16.

Twenty years later in May 1935, the president of MBI delivered a polemic to the Baptist Ministers' Meeting of New York City on the purpose of Bible training schools. In his speech entitled "Why Bible Institutes?", James M. Gray acknowledged the tension between the Bible institute and seminary and then proceeded to define the Bible institute or Bible training school of the 1930s.[4] These schools were interdenominational and the students were encouraged to maintain their loyalty to their churches where consistent with loyalty to God's truth. By the late 1940s, over 75 percent of the forty-nine Bible colleges surveyed enrolled students from five or more denominations with over half the colleges representing ten or more.[5] In addition to his description of interdenominationalism, Gray highlighted several other characteristics key to the Bible college movement at this time. Educational credibility was proven by the fact that many of the key players were educated at Ivy League institutions. Gray also acknowledged the non-traditional student as the target of the Bible college which was different from the seminary. He further explained that the goal of the Bible institute was to train layworkers or "men and women of more advanced years who had been denied scholastic opportunities in their youth." However, college and seminary graduates were also welcome, especially those who wished "to supplement their training with a thorough study of the English Bible, gospel music, and methods of aggressive Christian work."[6] Gray also emphasized to the Baptist ministers the fact that some denominations were beginning to look to MBI and other Bible training schools for men and women prepared

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[4]James M. Gray, "Why Bible Institutes?" Moody Bible Institute Monthly, October 1935, 64. This article is the text of a speech presented to the Baptist Ministers' Meeting, New York, NY, 6 May 1935.

[5]Harold W. Boon, "The development of the Bible College or Institute in the United States and Canada Since 1880 and Its Relationship to the Field of Theological Education in America" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1950), 68.

[6]Moody Bible Institute, Moody Bible Institute Bulletin, 1933 (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1933), 9.

for Christian ministry at home or on the foreign fields. He claimed, ". . . not a few churches in many denominations are looking to us from time to time to supply them with pastors and the same is true of several foreign missionary societies that turn to us for candidates for their fields."[7]

Gray completed his address by returning to the doctrinal issues of the fundamentalist/modernist debates. He crisply chastised the seminaries for not teaching the "precious truths of Scripture." The emphasis placed on these fundamentals of the faith allowed the Bible institute and training schools to attract more "truly saved young men and women than any others." For the Bible institute students it was the hope of Christ's return and a Holy Spirit-induced evangelistic fervor which "gave them spiritual power, which made them soul winners, and which separated them from the aims and methods and spirit of the world."[8]

In this address to a group of Baptist ministers, James Gray defined the Bible institute of the 1930s. While MBI represented the handful of training schools which had been in existence for forty years or more, the Bible institutes which began amidst the futile doctrinal struggles of the twenties also reflected these same goals. Prior to the founding of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges in 1947, the American Bible college was defined by doctrinal integrity, the non-traditional student, vocational training for Christian ministry, and in cases where history and financial resources allowed—credibility in faculty and curriculum.

In January 1947, the first organizational meeting of what would become the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) was held in Winona Lake, Indiana. The topics discussed in this week of meetings define AABC to this day. In a letter from the dean of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) to the president of Columbia Bible

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[7]Gray, 64.

[8]Ibid., 65.

College in South Carolina, key issues were raised which are revisited on a yearly basis. As for a doctrinal statement for the association, Dean Samuel Sutherland of BIOLA wished that the AABC should adopt positions which were parallel to the "Historic Christian Fundamentals of the Faith, with a statement broad enough in connection with eschatology so that we need not take time to debate any minor differences which may exist." Sutherland also suggested that the future of AABC be "completely independent of all ecclesiastical affiliations and that the association be of such high academic standard that it will command the respect of educational institutions and educators who are not already prejudiced against everything that pertains to Christianity."[9]

The doctrinal concerns expressed by Sutherland were congruent with those of Gray a decade earlier. However, the introduction of high academic standards as a means to gain respect from the secular educational entities was a new addition to the definition of the Bible college. It sheds light on the rising inferiority complex by the movement for fear of being less than academic within the mainstream of American higher education.

These thoughts continued throughout this week of planning meetings as the subject of transfer credit was discussed. With thoughts that more credits would transfer from Bible colleges to Christian liberal arts colleges, it was hoped that "our standards might draw together a sufficient number of Bible colleges of high academic standards to make a new bracket for such schools in the general field of education."[10] Subsequently, a goal of AABC was to be recognized by such strategic educational bodies as the United States Department of Education and the Association of Theological Schools. With this goal in

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[9]Samuel Sutherland to Robert McQuilkin, January 1947, letter in the archives of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, Fayetteville, AR.; quoted in John Mostert, The AABC Story: Fifty Years in the American Association of Bible Colleges (Fayetteville, AR.: American Association of Bible Colleges, 1986), 21.

[10]Samuel Sutherland, "Minutes of the Committee to Organize the Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Colleges," 29 January 1947; quoted in Mostert, 27.

mind, the founding members of AABC sought to standardize curricula, library quotas, faculty pay and academic expectations, facilities, textbooks, syllabi, and transfer credit records.

The inauguration of the American Association of Bible Colleges in 1947 signaled the first attempt at defining in more specific concrete terms the definition of a Bible institute or college. Of special note is the fact that academic excellence became a driving force of the movement even though it was initiated from a defensive mindset. This struggle for recognition of academic equality can be seen as the Bible college is defined by AABC from the 1950s to the 1990s.

The Mission of the Bible College in Transition, 1950-1990

The internal tension faced by each and every Bible college was in evidence at the foundational meetings of the AABC. This struggle centered on the mission of the Bible college—not the specific mission statement of each institution which will be discussed later, but the overall defining elements of a Bible college. Can a Bible college claim educational excellence as measured by societal norms when in essence the movement has been a reaction to the drift of society as a whole in the first place? Or, is it possible for the Bible college to be recognized as a viable educational entity as it fulfills a distinct mission if that mission precludes academic excellence from being the first priority? Members of AABC have for years said that both the training for vocational Christian service and academic excellence can be achieved. Yet, over the years the Bible college movement has defined itself as countercultural—a reactionary movement which makes the union with societal norms of excellence logically impossible. These paradoxical themes run through the various AABC documents of the last forty years.

In the early years of the AABC, the Bible college movement positioned itself with its constituencies as a superior educational option compared to secular higher education.

In 1953, Charles Seidenspinner of the National Association of Evangelicals defended the Bible college movement. He presented his definition of the Bible college with an interesting logic:

> Bible schools represent education with a purpose. The development of distinctive objectives and their attainment represents a major criterion of judgment for the rating of institutions of higher learning by one of the largest accrediting agencies in North America. In this factor Bible schools excel, for the emphasis in the presentation of a particular point of view with the respect of Biblical beliefs and personal life is paramount.
>
> In a day and age when higher education is without a centralizing motive or purpose and without a standard or norm, Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges offer an education with God's Word as the chief text and standard, and the chief purpose and motive the attainment of His will in the individual life, and public ministry.[11]

To Seidenspinner, the purpose of the Bible college alone made it a superior form of education.

A superiority in purpose, however, is not necessarily congruent to an excellent education. The very first Newsletter of AABC reflected this tension in identity when it stated, "It follows that Bible education is first in educational values. The centrality of Biblical education is of particular significance today. Contemporary education is without focus or meaningful purpose." Later, the same bulletin stated, "The paradox that confronts us as Bible college educators is that while Bible college education ranks first in values it is vastly underrated. It should be given a place of preeminence whereas it is frequently regarded as inferior and only partially evolved as an acceptable type of college education."[12]

Several years later J. C. Macaulay, the president of the London College of Bible and Missions in Ontario, echoed these same sentiments only in a more positive manner. In an

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[11]Charles Seidenspinner, "Why Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges?" United Evangelical Action, 15 June 1953, 16-17.

[12] Safara A. Witmer, "From the Editor," Newsletter of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges 1 (June 1957): 2. This newsletter will subsequently be referred to as the AABC Newsletter.

address to his faculty, Macaulay listed four primary objectives of the Bible college—the first of which was to glorify God. The second and third objectives were to spiritually develop the students and to promote the spread of the Gospel. The fourth objective—develop scholars—seemed a bit inconsistent. To many within the Bible college movement this had a flat ring to it as it failed to resonate with the lofty, more spiritual goals of the first three objectives. Macaulay went on to explain that "True scholarship will certainly glorify God more than shoddy academic procedures. True scholarship will give breadth and depth to character. True scholarship will arm our young people with a clear definition of the Gospel related to the thinking of today."[13] Early in the formation of AABC, there were those voices which desired an emphasis on scholarship.

Additional defining elements of the mission of AABC and its member institutions were framed by contemporary American society. Just two decades earlier, the Bible college movement had touted its educational value system over the secular system. Now with the Viet Nam War in full swing and the cultural revolution of Woodstock, the Bible college movement had an easy time justifying itself as an option to the developing campus cultures. Three statements of this era from the AABC Newsletter and a Christian periodical define the Bible college in this cultural context:

> The institution [Bible college] seeks to influence the contemporary culture and to be involved in it. It stands unapologetically for the Christian faith, seeks to bring the Christian ethic to bear upon the culture, and challenges the prevailing secularism and humanism of our times. It aims to prepare students for creative vocational leadership and constructive involvement.[14]

> In view of secularism, relativism, and absence of a valid system of moral and spiritual values, which are generally characteristic of contemporary higher

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[13]J. C. Macaulay, "Bible College Aims," AABC Newsletter 7 (February 1963): 11.

[14]National Association of Evangelicals, Education Commission on Higher Education, "The Affirming College" (Chicago: National Association of Evangelicals, 1966); quoted in AABC Newsletter 10 (Fall 1966): 5.

> education, there exists a growing need for the Bible college, with its Biblically-oriented program to prepare young people for Christian life and service.[15]
>
> In a day when naturalism, pragmatism, and secularism are much in evidence in American higher education, the Bible college's emphasis on biblical study is significant. The typical American university scarcely can be said to promote faith in ultimate values. The Bible college on the other hand, has its roots in the Bible as the Word of God. This is basic to the educational philosophy of the Bible college.[16]

Dr. S. A. Witmer, the first executive director of AABC, summed up the previous quotes in his book Education With Dimension. Speaking of Bible colleges and their development Witmer said, "They represent a pietistic reaction to secularism, a theistic reaction to humanism and agnosticism, a resurgence of spiritual dynamic in Protestantism, a restoration of Biblical authority and direction in education, and a return to the central concerns of Christian education—the implementation of Christ's Great Commission. . . ." In one sense, this response to the secular educational philosophy is consistent with the long-standing Christian protest which, in its resultant reforms, has brought much vitality to Christianity through its countercultural movements. Unfortunately this reaction breeds defensiveness, conservatism, as well as the metaphor of warfare.[17]

The Bible college movement had no time to fight. With the retrenchment in higher education taking place in the late seventies and early eighties, there was little time to react to the secular humanism of mainstream American higher education. In light of the declining enrollments, the Bible colleges were forced to reexamine their own mission. It was during this struggle to attract students that many institutions began to broaden their

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[15]John Mostert, "The Bible College Today," AABC Newsletter 11 (Spring 1967): 13.

[16]John Mostert, "Unheralded Halls of Higher Learning," Christian Life, June 1967, 70.

[17]S. A. Witmer, The Bible College Story: Education With Dimension (Manhasset, NY.: Channel Press, Inc., 1962), 30; Ian Rennie, "A Vision of the Bible Colleges in the 1980s," AABC Newsletter 27 (May 1983): 12.

curriculum into non-vocational areas. Business, journalism, social work, and state-certified teacher education programs began to dot the Bible college landscape along with the standard pastoral, missionary, church education, and church music majors.

In 1988, the executive director of AABC opened the window to more avocational majors in the Bible college. He asked the question:

> . . . has the conventional view of the Bible college as a 'special purpose institution' for the preparation of 'professional church workers' enabled the laymen to evangelistically engage the worldviews of his neighbors and co-workers better than if he were able to have the advantage of a Biblically-integrated higher education himself? Should we not enlarge our vision to include the preparation of such gap men?

He continued by asking:

> Where then are we to prepare those who in God's evangelistic plan are to serve as architects, nurses, accountants, journalists, et cetera? Is there not a gap in Christian higher education just as there is once again a gap between the clergy and those that fill our offices and neighborhoods?
>
> Bible colleges are in a position to fill this gap in Christian higher education. To enter this open door in faith will not only enable the church to more effectively penetrate society with the gospel of Jesus Christ, but also aid in the revitalization of many local assemblies.[18]

The above statements were landmark as one thinks of the definition of a Bible college. The definition of the previous one hundred years had been much narrower—always focused on the needs of the local church. The American Bible college had just been recast as a Christian liberal arts college. Many Bible colleges took advantage of this shift as evidenced in recruitment advertising.

In a special advertising section of Christianity Today, the academic dean at one of the Bible colleges wrote, "Bible colleges range from schools whose sole purpose is to prepare students for Christian vocations to those that offer preparation for a variety of vocations. All Bible colleges are not created equal, yet five distinctives lie at the heart of

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[18]Randall Bell, "The State of the Bible College," AABC Newsletter 32 (January, 1988): 6.

each one."[19] In the subsequent discussion these five overarching characteristics of a Bible college are described. The emphases of each Bible college are: 1) a Christ-centered view of life and the world; 2) a Bible-centered curriculum; 3) character development; 4) service to God and man; and 5) the training of world-changers. Many would say that these characteristics are also true of a Christian liberal arts college.

Similarly, the current definition of a Bible college as stated in AABC documents reflects this merging of definitions.

> A Bible college is a postsecondary educational institution in which the Bible is central. The study of the Bible constitutes a major core of each curriculum and is required of all students. The truths of the Bible condition the understanding of all disciplines and become the basis for the students' view of their universe. The principles of the Bible condition the institution's operational policies and practices and the regulation of student behavior. The teachings of the Bible concerning worldwide service provide the basis for the development of service skills. The spiritual development of the students through the application of biblical truth is a primary objective.[20]

This definition correctly describes many Christian liberal arts colleges today. A few even require the thirty hours of Bible or Bible-related courses in their undergraduate curriculum.[21]

As the Bible college movement struggles to reach the twenty-first century, it speaks of its central purpose—the training of men and women to spread the Gospel throughout the world. However, the movement's reactionary nature, admittedly countercultural, has created a tension within as the movement seeks the affirmation of mainstream higher education. For example, is the striving for academic excellence as

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[19]Lynn Gardner, "Why Go to a Bible College?" Christianity Today, 27 April 1992, 52-57.

[20]Randall Bell, "Proposed Definition," AABC Newsletter 33 (April 1989): 2.

[21]One of the three or four defining elements of a Bible college in contrast to a Christian liberal arts college is the fact that every student is required a minimum of thirty hours of Bible and theology core courses. This requirement has recently been lowered for some non-ministry majors.

evidenced by increased concern over faculty credentials consistent with the training of students for full-time Christian service? Should this even be a concern for Bible colleges? These questions are compounded as the once single-purpose institution diversifies into "avocational" education in contrast to training for full-time ministry.

As true with most definitions there is usually one general overriding meaning with many hidden nuances. Over the last fifty years, the Bible college movement has remained consistent in its foundational purposes but additional nuances have created a less than uniform movement. This only makes more difficult the task of defining the Bible college movement. This identity crisis is reflected at the level of the individual institutions. Just as there has been a shift in the definition of the movement as a whole so also there has been a shift in the specific missions of many Bible colleges.

Historical Analysis of Specific Bible College Mission Statements

As the Bible college movement seeks to understand itself it is also necessary to reflect on individual institutions. Not only does an organization define the particulars within itself, but the parts also define the entire organization. When Safara Witmer published his text on Bible colleges in 1962, he described fifteen "leading" Bible schools within the United States. While the three to four paragraph historical description of each college was interesting, the purpose of the individual institutions was not analyzed in relationship to the Bible college movement. But as we shall see, the Bible college movement was very monolithic in the early 1960s.[22]

With the historical framework of the previous chapter as background, the evolution of institutional mission statements will be analyzed. The institutions discussed in the following section represent a broad spectrum within the Bible college movement not only from the perspective of mission but from other demographic considerations

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[22]Witmer, 71.

such as size, affiliation, age, and geography. Up until 1991, all were members of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges.

Ozark Christian College

Ozark Bible College, later to be known as Ozark Christian College, was founded in 1942 in Bentonville, Arkansas. As is the case with some other Bible colleges, a predecessor institution had been started four years earlier but due to misunderstandings between founding board members and confusion as to the purpose of the training school a reorganization occurred. In the early days a technical school had been envisioned with young men and women learning a trade while studying the Bible. With the reorganization in 1942, Ozark became an institution "organized as a co-educational Christian college—the chief purpose of which was to train worthy Christian men and women for the ministry of the Word and full-time Christian work such as ministers, missionaries, evangelistic singers, church secretaries, educational directors, assistant ministers, pastoral helpers, etc."[23] The training of vocational church workers was stated very specifically and clearly as the founding purpose.

In October 1944, Ozark Bible College relocated to Joplin, Missouri to better service the four-state area of Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Six hundred churches within the Church of Christ fellowship had closed in the previous thirty years so that only eight hundred churches, mostly small-town and rural, existed in this region when Ozark was founded. The student newspaper, The Compass, recounted, "Several hundred of the eight hundred [churches] were without preachers and nearly two hundred has part-time preaching. One preacher in the state had served at one time, twenty-one

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[23]The Compass, August 1946, 3; quoted in Lynn Gardner, Ozark Christian College: A Vision of Teaching the Word of Christ in the Spirit of Christ (Joplin, MO.: Ozark Christian College, 1992), 61. The Compass was the official college newspaper of what at that time was Ozark Bible College.

churches in seven different counties and at the same time ministered to some churches in Illinois."[24] Thus Ozark was founded in a strategic location with the purpose of reviving the churches and saving the Restoration movement from a slow death.[25]

Ozark grew steadily, even geometrically, from decade to decade reaching a height of 790 students in 1969. This enrollment gradually decreased throughout the 1980s when the end of the baby-boom paralyzed many smaller institutions within American higher education. In 1992, there were 465 students enrolled with twenty-three full-time and seventeen part-time faculty members. Students may earn a Bachelor of Theology or a Bachelor of Arts in theology, Biblical literature, Christian education, music, or Bible/music.

The mission of Ozark Christian College changed over the years of growth. In 1972 the role of the college was stated as follows:

> The purpose or purposes for which this corporation is organized are to establish, maintain, and operate a Bible college for the education and training of preachers, missionaries, evangelists, elders, deacons, teachers, youth directors, musicians, church secretaries, and other full-time and part-time Christian workers and for the general religious training of persons of all ages.[26]

As noted by the previous quotation, curriculum was developed for students who would not be seeking ministry positions. This option is stated more specifically in a mission statement adopted by the Ozark trustees in 1987. The phrase "general religious training for all persons" was amplified to say "Biblical and practical training is also provided for those who will serve the church in non-vocational roles such as elders,

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[24]The Compass, February 1968, 1-2; quoted in Gardner, 75.

[25] The "Restoration" movement is a commonly acknowledged term used within the fellowship of the Christian Churches/Church of Christ. This fellowship is the conservative offshoot of the more liberal Disciples of Christ denomination and seeks to restore the church to its New Testament moorings. "Restoration History" is a course taught on many of these campuses.

[26]Self-Evaluation Study, 1984, 36-37; quoted in Gardner, 284.

deacons, Bible school teachers, and youth sponsors."[27] In other words, Ozark was prepared to train the layperson to faithfully serve in his or her community in majors not directly related to full-time Christian service.

This evolution of the mission statement acknowledges that a percentage of graduates enter the secular job market. However, it is important to note that in the current catalog, the four- and five-year on-campus degree programs are specific to vocational Christian ministry. Cooperative programs and associate degree offerings are used by Ozark to prepare students who desire secular vocations. Ozark also offers a two year Certificate of Biblical Literature which "is recommended to persons expecting to find their life work in some field other than preaching. It should furnish them valuable protection against the non-Christian influences likely to be met in higher education in other fields. . . . A sound foundation of Bible knowledge is the best foundation for any education, or for any career for a Christian."[28] Some constituencies viewed Ozark's mission as a form of religious inoculation against the secular society. In a general sense, parents might view the years at Ozark as a form of insurance that their son or daughter would not be swayed from the teachings of the church by worldly influences confronted upon graduation. Many faculty, on the other hand, would view this "protection against the non-Christian influences" as an opportunity to teach critical thinking skills.

In 1981, an Ozark alumni survey confirmed that 80 percent of the 495 respondents were in a full-time religious vocation.[29] This figure should be very encouraging to any constituent who might be questioning the direction of Ozark Christian College—especially if these numbers hold up today. Nevertheless, Ozark has

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[27] Gardner, 284-85.

[28]Ozark Christian College, Catalog, 1993-95, (Joplin, MO.: Ozark Christian College, 1993), 76.

[29]Gardner, 198-99.

acknowledged that part of its mission is to train students who will someday be in a secular vocation as compared to serving the church in a full-time capacity. Thus in fifty years of existence the mission of Ozark Christian College has broadened.

Florida Christian College

In 1976, the Florida Christian College was founded in Orlando as the Central Florida Bible College. As true with most Bible colleges aligned with what historically has become known as the Restoration movement, the initial purpose of Florida Christian was to support the growing numbers of Christian Churches/Churches of Christ in central Florida. This is in contrast with its sister institution, Ozark, which was founded to keep churches from closing. With the burgeoning growth of Orlando from the early seventies to the present, Florida Christian had the vision of starting and supporting new churches. The institution itself also reflected dynamic growth as a total of 228 students received degrees in the first nine graduating classes from 1980 to 1989.

The first catalog of Florida Christian ('76-'77) did not have a concise mission statement, but several notations reflect the initial purposes. Central Florida Bible College claimed to give its first students ". . . a basic working knowledge of the Bible" and ". . . the basic skills necessary to successfully apply your working knowledge of the Bible to the establishment (or continuance) of Christian churches within any given community." The first curriculum framework was "designed to prepare you [the student] for vocational ministry—such as becoming a preacher or foreign missionary or becoming a director of Christian education in a larger congregation." Two years later the catalog of Central Florida Bible College stated, "The primary objective of our program is to prepare you [the student] for the PREACHING AND TEACHING MINISTRY of Jesus Christ."[30]

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[30]Central Florida Bible College, Catalog of 1976-77, (Orlando: Central Florida

By 1980, the Articles of Incorporation solidified the purpose of CFBC as "to conduct a course of study to educate men and women for Christian service, to provide a program of instruction on the college level, and to grant appropriate degrees." A decade later another phrase, ". . . and to serve as a resource to the churches, especially in Florida," had been added. In the commentary on the above statements it is emphasized that "All professed Christians can profit from the Florida Christian College experience. The College, however, is oriented toward preparing men and women for church-related vocations."[31]

The mission statement no longer specifically refers to a "preaching and teaching ministry" nor does it speak of vocational Christian ministry. Instead it speaks of "church-related vocations." A shift has been made at Florida Christian College to encourage students to enroll who initially are not considering full-time Christian ministry. All of the current curricular offerings—Christian education, counseling, elementary education, missions, music, preaching, and youth ministry—lend themselves to specific full-time Christian ministry positions. In some cases elementary education and counseling would be considered questionable. Nevertheless, Florida Christian College has taken the route of its sister college, Ozark, by having a broader mission statement but only servicing ministry majors.

Hobe Sound Bible College

Hobe Sound Bible College began in 1960 as the Hobe Sound Bible Institute on the eastern coast of Florida. Unlike Ozark and Florida Christian which were support arms of a church fellowship, Hobe Sound was founded as "a Christian educational institution

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Bible College, 1976), 2; Central Florida Bible College, Catalog of 1978-79, 3.

[31]Central Florida Bible College, Catalog of 1980-82, 6; Florida Christian College, Catalog of 1990-92, (Kissimmee, FL.: Florida Christian College, 1990), 6.

committed to the principles and standards of conservative Bible holiness."[32] The emphasis on holiness in the spiritual life was flamed by the periodic camp meetings held by the Florida Evangelistic Association. It was the grounds and facilities of the Sea Breeze Camp which became the location of Hobe Sound Bible Institute.

This commitment to Biblical holiness was interwoven into the purpose statements of Hobe Sound. In one of the early catalogs, Hobe Sound purposed "to provide a program of progressive learning experiences pledged to unswerving loyalty to God and His Word and committed to the principles and standards embodied in Bible holiness, we propose to offer training spiritually, intellectually, and for life."[33] Another statement from the earliest available catalog substantiates this emphasis on spiritual life training over training for vocational Christian service:

> While especially interested in preparing laborers for the whitened harvest fields, our primary purpose is not merely to train for service in the specialized sense of the word but rather to lay a foundation for Christian living irrespective of one's vocation. For one who is called of God to specialized service, such as minister or missionary, a Bible college education is an imperative; and for any who propose to live a life dedicated for Christ in whatever place they may labor, it will prove invaluable. Since being is more essential than doing, our primary aim is to build solid, intelligent Christian character.[34]

This same statement is quoted in the Hobe Sound catalog twenty-five years later.

The curriculum of Hobe Sound Bible College has changed little over the last three decades. Majors are offered in ministerial studies, missiology, nursing, Christian teacher education, and Christian music. As Hobe Sound reflects on the nursing and

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[32] Hobe Sound Bible College, Catalog for 1991-1993, (Hobe Sound, FL.: Hobe Sound Bible College, 1991), 8.

[33] Hobe Sound Bible Institute, Catalog, 1973-74, 7. The descriptor "progressive" does not imply the acceptance of John Dewey's educational philosophy. It is progressive in the sense that as the student matures through his or her Hobe Sound experience, he or she is challenged to progress to the next step of spiritual, physical, mental and social maturity.

[34] Hobe Sound Bible Institute, Catalog, 1968-71, 3.

teacher education programs, the emphasis is on service. "These programs [nursing] are open only to those who wish to make nursing a means of service for Christ—in short, a mission, not merely a profession—whether in America or in a foreign country." Service to the Christian community is also emphasized when speaking of the teacher education program. "To meet the demand for teachers in Christian schools, the Christian Teacher Education major is offered. While aiming to equal and exceed the educational requirements of State Departments of Education for teacher education, it is not our primary purpose to train teachers for state schools but for Christian Schools."[35] Hobe Sound is so committed to the ministry aspect that it has not designed the teacher education program for any state accreditation or recognition by a state department of education. This limitation of graduates to Christian schools by not affording state certification is consistent with the narrow mission of Hobe Sound.

The primary aim of Hobe Sound Bible College is to lay a foundation of "conservative Bible holiness" in each student. The goals of intellectual and spiritual development take precedence over training for a specific ministry. Thus every student will be prepared to function within society either vocationally or avocationally to serve the Church. The mission of Hobe Sound Bible College has changed very little since its founding thirty-five years ago.

Summit Christian College

Summit Christian College of Fort Wayne, Indiana, is an example of one Bible college which underwent a major change of mission over its ninety years of existence. What began in 1904 as the independent Bethany Bible Institute in Bluffton, Ohio, one semester later had evolved into Fort Wayne Bible Training School under the jurisdiction

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[35]Hobe Sound Bible College, Catalog, 1991-93, 47, 51.

of the Missionary Church. In 1930, the name was changed to Fort Wayne Bible Institute and by 1943 there were 232 students enrolled representing twenty-six denominations.

In 1943, as Fort Wayne prepared to celebrate its fortieth anniversary, the major purpose was ". . . to train young people for Christian service at home and abroad. It holds that the one supreme mission of the church is world evangelism. . . ."[36] Within the next ten years Fort Wayne Bible Institute changed its name to Fort Wayne Bible College and initiated specialized courses in radio broadcasting, journalism, and linguistics, besides the standard programs in pastoral training, missions, Christian education, and sacred music.

In 1954, Fort Wayne Bible College was afforded a luxury for many Bible colleges when its credits became transferable to the state university and its teacher education program was accredited by the Indiana State Department of Public Instruction. Naturally, this precipitated the growth of the elementary education major. Two years later, Fort Wayne described itself as "an accredited college that specializes in the preparation of men and women for various forms of Christian service at home and abroad." This statement lends itself to a very broad definition of Christian service and a less than emphatic desire to encourage the students to full-time Christian ministry. A decade later the mission statement claimed that Fort Wayne ". . . is a four-year college specializing in two major fields: church vocations and teacher education. For many years its primary objective has been the preparation of men and women for various forms of Christian service at home and in foreign lands."[37]

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[36]Fort Wayne Bible Institute, Catalog of 1943-44, (Ft. Wayne, IN.: Fort Wayne Bible Institute, 1943), 7.

[37]Fort Wayne Bible College, Catalog of 1956-57, 10; Fort Wayne Bible College, Catalog of 1966-67, 8.

As the mission statement of Fort Wayne Bible College slowly evolved, so did the curriculum. Every student of Fort Wayne was still required to take the thirty hour core of Bible and theology as required by AABC, but additional majors had developed. By 1980, degrees were offered in business administration, social work, and pre-seminary studies, which, was essentially a general studies major. In 1989, the name of Fort Wayne Bible College was changed to the more generic name of Summit Christian College. The annual catalog commented, "The new name better represents the breadth of mission at the College. For many decades the thrust of the College has been to educate people for direct church ministry. In recent years, however, the scope of educational offerings has been expanded to include other areas of service as well." This new sweeping mission statement—"The college exists to equip persons for life and service through the Church in its world mission"—placed the new Summit Christian College in the same educational arena as Christian liberal arts colleges.[38] Within three years, as a result of financial exigencies, Summit had been absorbed by Taylor University, a leading Christian liberal arts college located sixty miles south of Fort Wayne.

The Fort Wayne Bible Training School began in 1904 with the narrow focus of training students to serve the church as pastors, missionaries, and musicians. The mission of Fort Wayne Bible Institute, and later the college, slowly evolved to the point where students from many denominations were being trained for vocations outside specific church ministries. Unfortunately, with the dawn of Summit Christian College came the realities of survival in the highly competitive world of the Christian liberal arts college. This was true especially in northern Indiana with Bethel, Grace, Goshen, Manchester, Huntington, Anderson, Taylor, and Indiana Wesleyan all within one hundred miles of Fort Wayne. Today, the campus of Summit Christian is known as Taylor

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[38]Summit Christian College, Catalog of 1989-91 (Ft. Wayne, IN.: Summit Christian College, 1989), i, v.

University/Fort Wayne where it serves as a reminder to the Bible colleges across the United States that a breadth of mission or loss of the historic mission does not bid well unless a Bible college seeks to maintain its original distinctives.

William Tyndale College

William Tyndale College, located in suburban Detroit, is an institution which mirrors the history of Fort Wayne Bible College save for the fact that it still exists. While Fort Wayne/Summit's move into the circle of Christian liberal arts colleges was somewhat unconscious, Tyndale's assertion as a Christian liberal arts college has been very intentional. Tyndale, like Summit, was once a Bible college.

In 1945, a group of Christian businessmen founded the Detroit Bible Institute as an institution where young people would be adequately trained in the Word of God. In the inaugural semester of the three-year diploma program there were 150 students enrolled—fifty-four in day school and ninety-six in the evening school. Ten denominations were represented. The early curriculum consisted of Bible synthesis, Bible analysis, Christian evidences, music, missions, child evangelism, and other academic as well as ministry-related courses. By 1949, a mission statement appeared in the catalog which read, "The object of Detroit Bible Institute is to offer courses which adequately prepare men and women for effective Christian service both at home and abroad."[39]

In 1960, Detroit Bible Institute followed the lead of many other Bible institutes and changed its name from an "Institute" to "College." Even though Detroit now offered four-year degree programs, the State of Michigan permitted only the Bachelor of Religious Education to be granted. No Bachelor of Arts degrees could be awarded in

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[39]Detroit Bible Institute, Bulletin of the Detroit Bible Institute, March 1946, i; Detroit Bible Institute, Catalog, 1949-50 (Detroit: Detroit Bible Institute, 1949), 6.

Michigan by Bible colleges until 1990—and then only on a limited basis. With the new degree program in place, the purpose statement of Detroit Bible College was changed in 1963 to reflect a broader mission. "The objective of Detroit Bible College is to give men and women a Bible-based, Christ-centered education in effective Christian living and service."[40]

The shift to a Christian liberal arts college began with this statement of 1963 so that by 1976 the term "Bible-based" had been dropped in favor of "high quality." Bible college educators shudder at the implication of exclusivity between these two ideas. High quality can and should coexist with a Bible education. However, as the Bible college movement sought acknowledgment from mainstream American higher education, semantic choices were made to better position the Bible college amongst its secular peers. Even though the mission statement at Detroit had broadened, the college still only offered degrees in General Bible, Pastoral Ministry, Christian Education, Missions, and Bible-Music. This was the lingering result of only being allowed to grant a Bachelor of Religious Education.[41]

Another result of the move to a less-defined mission was a change of name. In 1981, Detroit Bible College was renamed William Tyndale College after the sixteenth century martyr who first translated the Bible into English. With a new president at the helm in 1990, Dr. James McHaan, Tyndale embarked on an aggressive campaign to change its image. For example, the degree programs to be offered at this former Bible college were now to include business administration, computer science, teacher certification, political science, pre-law, biology and pre-medicine, mathematics and

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[40]Detroit Bible College, Catalog, 1963-64, 12.

[41]Detroit Bible College, Catalog, 1976-77, 8, 33.

pre-engineering, philosophy, ethics, and finally evangelism/discipleship and missions.[42]

This metamorphosis, however, was rooted in McHaan's philosophy of Christian higher education which was a reaction to the historic fundamentalist ideas behind the Bible college movement. McHaan reacted to the secular/sacred dichotomy which was a trademark of many Bible colleges—a view which hindered a healthy unified Christian world-view. He writes, "Many other Christians are anti-intellectual and disregard the pursuit of truth for its own sake in all possible subjects and disciplines. They sometimes even suggest that rigorous and honest intellectual study is dangerous for Christianity. Instead they stress retreat and isolation from the intellectual battlefield." McHaan counterbalanced Tyndale's philosophy of education as a reaction to the sense of anti-intellectualism within the Bible college movement. Soon McHaan had institutionalized his challenge of academic and spiritual integration as he described the mission of Tyndale. In a quarterly newsletter he claimed that "the task of constructing a Christian world-view in the minds of students and teaching them to think, to evaluate, and to act from it is the raison d'être of a Christian liberal arts college like Tyndale."[43]

Today, Tyndale College finds itself outside the orbit of Bible colleges and is in a position akin to Summit Christian before it merged with Taylor University. Without any supporting denomination, with a small constituency of limited geographical breadth, and with a proximity to many established church-related and Christian liberal arts colleges, Tyndale is seeking a niche. Survival will be difficult as Tyndale enters the rushing rapids of American higher education.

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[42]James C. McHaan, "The Future of Tyndale College," Tyndale Today, October 1990, 2.

[43]James C. McHaan, "Tyndale College vs. Split-Brain Thinking," Tyndale Today, October 1991, 3; James C. McHaan, "Thinking Christianly about 'Whatever' . . . and Tyndale College," Tyndale Today, January 1992, 2.

This developing breadth of mission as evidenced by Ozark Christian, Florida Christian, Tyndale, and what was once Fort Wayne Bible College further illustrates the current identity crisis within the Bible college movement. This spectrum of mission reflects a handful of institutions on the right, such as Hobe Sound, which seek to train for fruitful Christian living as well as a church-related vocation. In the center, where the majority of the Bible colleges find themselves, Ozark and Florida Christian strive in varying degrees to educate and train students for full-time Christian service while concurrently servicing programs for students planning for non-church vocations. This juggling act moves some institutions closer to the Christian liberal arts model espoused by Tyndale and Taylor University/Fort Wayne. These different nuances on the mission of the Bible college were keenly evidenced upon campus visits.

An Analysis of Mission—Current Trends

The identity crisis of the Bible college is found not only in the pages of the college catalogs, alumni newsletters, or institutional histories, but it is a primary topic of discussion from the board level on down at the Bible colleges themselves. In visits to over twenty of these institutions, interviews with administrators and faculty revealed the same tension as seen in the written documents.

When asked to articulate the mission of the respective institution, many interviewees felt compelled to not only describe the mission but also the concerns and frustrations which come with the evolution of such a mission. Constituency concerns, the definition of "ministry", the integrity of mission, and the broadening of the mission were just some of the topics of discussion.

A Philosophical Stalemate

An emphasis of this discussion has been the shift of the Bible college from a single purpose institution where students are trained only for full-time vocational Christian

service to a more multifaceted institution which educates students to step into the secular marketplace and serve the local church in a lay capacity. There are a handful of institutions which strive to maintain a singular focus as evidenced by the comments from faculty members and administrators alike.

A faculty member for twenty years whose father was a founder of Baptist Bible College very succinctly stated, "The mission from day one has been to train and equip men for the ministry—pastors, missionaries, and full-time church workers."[44] Another faculty member, with twenty-seven years logged at Central Bible College, claimed:

> We have one purpose and that is to train ministers, missionaries, and Christian workers for the local churches of the Assemblies of God, basically. Of course, we have a few who come here from other backgrounds [denominational] and go back to those churches to minister. And for me, that's ideal. I think its ideal for any institution. There is just one single purpose and everything you do in the classroom and in the chapel is aimed at that one goal.[45]

The academic dean at CBC reiterated these same thoughts while challenging those Bible colleges that have broadened their mission:

> In a capsule, [our mission is] the training of ministers and missionaries as we have engraved in stone out there along the drive. And we have stood for that. We have expanded our majors but they are all in church ministry of some facet of church ministry preparation. We haven't gotten into training for business, accounting, under the guise of well, we're training businessmen, business managers for churches. We haven't gotten into training public school teachers, this kind of thing.[46]

While these institutions have chosen to maintain a more narrow mission, other Bible colleges have been just as sincere and intentional in broadening the mission to

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[44]William E. Dowell Jr., interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, MO., tape recording, Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO.

[45]Charles Harris, interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, MO., tape recording, Central Bible College, Springfield, MO.

[46]Elmer Kirsch, interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, MO., tape recording, Central Bible College, Springfield, MO.

include servicing Christian students desiring either preparation for full-time church ministry or a secular vocation. One professor with thirty-six years in the Bible college movement expressed, "We are no longer a traditional one-lane Bible college. That mentality of training the people the Word of God and getting them into hands-on technique for ministry and get them out to save souls, we've moved away from that to some degree."[47]

Three academic deans and one faculty member clarified this evolving mission within the Bible college movement:

> I would say the bottom line of our mission is primarily to train Christian workers for full-time Christian service, but secondarily for those who will only be Christian laypeople within the framework of the church of Christ.[48]
>
> We are here primarily to prepare men and women to be church leaders and to be good Christians. There will be some who will never be preachers or missionaries or church secretaries, but they will be better elders and deacons and Sunday school teachers. We try to help both sets of people, primarily church vocations.[49]
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> I would say that we state our overall mission as to glorify God by seeking the evangelism of the world and edification of Christians worldwide. . . . Our primary or immediate mission is training men and women for Christian service in two areas—vocational Christian service and what we call volunteer Christian service.[50]
>
> Our stated mission is to train students into leadership positions in the churches. To me it is a bit more involved than that. We train them for leadership positions in the churches, yes, but I feel that we also train people just to be leaders in the church as a whole, not necessarily in church ministry, but out in the world in whatever position they are in, whatever career/vocation that they are in, to be a leader for the kingdom.[51]

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[47]Tom Wilson, interview by author, 15 February 1994, Lakeland, FL., tape recording, Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God, Lakeland, FL.

[48]Robert England, interview by author, 18 October 1993, Cincinnati, tape recording, God's Bible School & College, Cincinnati, OH.

[49]Earl Sims, interview by author, 18 October 1993, Cincinnati, tape recording, Cincinnati Bible College, Cincinnati, OH.

[50]Lynn Gardner, interview by author, 3 November 1993, Joplin, MO., tape recording, Ozark Christian College, Joplin, MO.

[51]Christy Schink, interview by author, 1 November 1993, Florissant, MO., tape

These comments represent the current trend of the Bible college movement and confirm what has been noted from the print media of the Bible colleges. However, it is not an easy transition as some Bible colleges seek a broader mission. Those colleges readily admit an identity crisis. An academic dean and a faculty member at separate institutions recounted their concerns this way:

> Although we are just now in a phase where as I put it, I think the college is in a bit of an identity crisis, as I think a lot of Bible colleges are, trying to figure out exactly how broadly we are going to define ministry in the future. And so, all of that to say that I think our mission focus is a bit fuzzy right now in the sense of the traditional mission idea—preparing people for full-time ministry.[52]

> There is a sense of having an identity crisis here. And we've been living for such a long time with a kind of two-model mold. Either you are a Bible college or you are a liberal arts college. And when you start to lose some of the distinctives that people have perceived for a Bible college, then that means you jumped into the liberal arts thing and some [of the constituencies] aren't able to distinguish between the liberal arts college and the liberal theological school.[53]

While the first comment speaks specifically to a lack of direction, the second thought raises the fear of being perceived as a Christian liberal arts school when essentially that might be a desire of some of the Bible colleges. Historically one of the main differences between the Christian liberal arts college and the Bible college has been the emphasis on ministry training. One of the ongoing mission-related tensions has been just how specific can ministry be defined within the Bible college context.

The Definition of "Ministry"

As the interview process continued throughout the representative institutions of AABC, a question repeatedly came to the fore. What is meant by the term, "ministry"? Or, how does one define "full-time Christian service"? A strict-constructionist would

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recording, St. Louis Christian College, Florissant, MO.

[52]Dan Burnett, interview by author, 19 October 1993, Circleville, OH., tape recording, Circleville Bible College, Circleville, OH.

[53]Richard Knoop, interview by author, 22 September 1993, Lincoln, IL., tape recording, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, IL.

define ministry in the historical narrow sense and would shape the Bible college to train full-time Christian workers. A liberal interpretation would allow for a breadth of mission and a corresponding curriculum which would train students to become effective laypersons while vocationally involved in a secular profession.

A faculty member and former dean at one of the Bible colleges framed the discussion this way:

> In the early 1970s, full-time church-related ministry was rather narrowly defined, and I think that one of the interesting things in the Bible college movement is how that mission statements are trying to remain focused, and yet be expanded. So there is a wide range of church-related vocations and parachurch vocations that are now being considered.[54]

A department chair for world missions at another institution related the struggle at his institution:

> Right now we are working with this whole issue of what is ministry. What is full-time Christian service? I do think that there is a legitimate need for dichotomy, but on the other hand, I think there is a need to break down the divisions. I do think that there is a special calling and a unique roll, function for training people vocationally to serve the church.[55]

At a third Bible college an administrator detailed the frustration this way:

> . . . but basically our business is training church leaders, and we're defining that more broadly. One track is training professional church leaders in paid positions (preachers, associate pastors, missionaries, and so forth), but the other track which is very much a part of our mission here at LCC is what we are calling for lack of a better term, is volunteer Christian leaders or laity (elders, Sunday school teachers, and so forth). Those who have a significant role in the leadership position of the church, they just don't get paid for it. Both of those are part of our mission statement. Part of our healthy tension here at this school is getting all the faculty to agree that those are legitimate definitions of our mission.[56]

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[54]David Case, interview by author, 19 October 1993, Circleville, OH., tape recording, Circleville Bible College, Circleville, OH.

[55]Doug Louwenburg, interview by author, 28 October 1992, Minneapolis, tape recording, North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, MN.

[56]Thomas Tanner, interview by author, 22 September 1993, Lincoln, IL., tape recording, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, IL.

This discussion of mission has not inhibited the Bible colleges from devising additional non-Christian service majors. The general feeling is that even though campus constituencies are unsure or divided as to what "ministry" really is, there is little or no time to stop and resolve the issue. In the meantime, many Bible colleges continue to inch along the spectrum reflecting more of a Christian liberal arts model.

The Shift of Mission

While some Bible colleges do not readily admit to a shift of mission there are those who acknowledge an intentional breadth of purpose. One faculty member reflected on such movement as he discussed his college's original mission and the meaning of full-time Christian service:

> . . . that [original mission] included the traditional sort of the big three: pastors, missionaries, and Christian ed. people. And that's how it stayed for quite a long time. And much of that still hangs on here. Well, my term, "hangs on" is a little pejorative. "Hang on" in this context means that those kind of goals for degree programs are still . . . they remain part of what we are doing here. But what we are doing has enlarged without excluding any of those.[57]

Reflecting on the shift at another institution, a faculty member readily admits:

> The reality is that we are slowly shifting programs that can also be used by the laity . . . So I don't ever see the Bible college or Vennard's task as training good Christian mechanics or farmers or whatever, but I see the necessity for some who want to go into accounting or business or whatever field. Some who will really lay the basis for going on [into secular or non-full-time Christian service], get their spiritual lives and their understanding of God's word solid and then go on.[58]

And finally, a third faculty member who expressed some concern of the evolving institutional purposes:

> I do think we have to be careful that we don't broaden our base so that we are trying to prepare so many vocations for all forms of services. I think we will then dilute ourselves and I think its both cost prohibitive [sic], but I really hope for my

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[57]Dale DeWitt, interview by author, 5 October 1993, Grand Rapids, tape recording, Grace Bible College, Grand Rapids, MI.

[58]Bruce Moyer, interview by author, 5 November 1993, University Park, IA., tape recording, Vennard College, University Park, IA.

> personal agenda that the school will maintain the primary focus on training people vocationally for work related to the church. . . . I think that there is a sense, we're certainly not going to get to be more narrow, if anything, we'll broaden in the vocational offerings. I just don't want to see us broaden too far, too fast.[59]

As this shift of mission is confessed internally, there are those who seek its point of origin. In some cases this breadth of mission has been the result of a zealous professor of psychology building a Christian counseling program or a sociology instructor convincing the administration that a social work degree would complement nicely the college's emphasis on ministry. In either example the pressures put to bear were generated internally. At most Bible colleges where the definition of "full-time Christian ministry" has become loosely defined, there has been ample external pressures as well.

External pressures. Of the seventy-five American Bible colleges in the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) only a few have a constituency broad enough and diverse enough that it has minimal affect on institutional decision-making. The smaller or more distinctive the supporting denomination or the more doctrinally resonant the constituency, the more impact there is on the Bible college. Such is the case with most Bible colleges. The congregations of a smaller denomination or the pastors within a smaller geographical area find it convenient to influence the Bible college.

This external pressure has directly impacted the shift of mission at some of the Bible colleges. A chair of the pastoral department at one such college observed:

> . . . if they [the churches] are going to continue to have a good staff, they have to continue to be aware of the culture in the day in which we live and broaden our majors to supply people who are qualified for these positions that a lot of times they are so afraid to broaden the majors of the Bible college because they are so concerned to be ministerial-oriented. [60]

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[59]Louwenburg, interview.

[60]James Allen, interview by author, 28 October 1992, Minneapolis, tape recording, North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, MN.

The academic dean at the same institution agreed with the effect of a clearly defined constituency as his college has added or deleted majors based upon the needs or desires of the supporting denomination. He went on to understate, "It is a challenging time to walk with the constituency. There, I think, is [sic] some ways we're a little bit advantaged in that we have as an Assemblies of God college, a very clearly defined constituency."[61]

Pressures on the curriculum have arisen as pastors, churches, and even gracious donors loyal to a specific college seek to impact the course offerings. Many faculty and administrators have recounted how pastors, deacons, or Christian school principals voice their preferences for specific majors. In many cases these majors would represent a broader definition of full-time Christian service.

One example can be found in Florida where the potential for college and church growth is boundless as a result of the population shift in the United States to the Sunbelt. It would be natural for this Bible college to service its fellowship of churches by developing an elementary education major. One faculty member admitted that this possibility "opens the door to our original mission dissipating." Yet later as he contemplated the Florida growth patterns he surmised, "It is a lot easier to make the case that it [elementary education] is genuinely a ministry." He admitted that this possibility was cause for lengthy discussion as it related to the mission of the college. "So there is reason to think that that [elementary education] is not going to automatically lead to some sort of expansion [of mission] that is out of control and so forth. But we talk about it and think about it a lot."[62]

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[61]Don Meyer, interview by author, 27 October 1993, Minneapolis, tape recording, North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, MN.

[62]Mike Chambers, interview by author, 16 February 1994, Kissimmee, FL., tape recording, Florida Christian Colleges, Kissimmee, FL.

At another Bible college, the president asked the academic dean to investigate the possibility of developing both a nursing program and a state-certified elementary education program. In response to the request, the academic dean reflected:

> Now on both of those [programs] we have to ask ourselves the question, 'Why are we wanting to do this?' Are we wanting to train nurses because the hospitals have a great demand for nurses? That's not a local church ministry. So right away we are colliding with what our objective and stated purpose is.[63]

This exploratory exercise by the academic dean had been precipitated by outside interests.

Another academic dean was very honest in crediting parents with pressuring colleges to add majors:

> The parent who is paying the bill wants to be assured that at the end of the bill there is some kind of livelihood possibilities to recover the cost, especially if they are borrowing money. That is, I think, a very real problem and a problem which has caused a number of our [Assembly of God] schools to branch into other areas. It is kind of, well you might call it a move of expediency rather than a move of mission. A school is either mission-driven or it is, let's say, survival-driven and that survival interest causes them to reach out to a broader spectrum of students because most of our schools are highly tuition-funded as against independent funding.[64]

This same administrator also told of another former Bible college which developed an elementary education major because of the expressed wishes of a trustee member.

Another external pressure placed upon a Bible college, and for some the most immediate, is that of survival. The cold hard facts of having full classrooms and residence halls to remain financially solvent is by far the most overriding external pressure. Not surprisingly, this was the heartbeat of some the academic administrators which were interviewed. Four of them responded to the tension between the realities of the market and the narrow, more idealistic mission of the standard Bible college.

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[63]Russell Dell, interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, MO., tape recording, Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO.

[64]Kirsch, interview.

From Missouri, Iowa, Ohio, and Michigan the balancing act between market and mission was described as follows:

> The mission of CBC is to equip men and women for life in ministry primarily in the confines of traditional Christian ministries. The reality is of the 4500 in our alumni association, more than 3000 are in marketplace ministries. . . . See, I am not opposed to Bible colleges broadening their curriculum as long as they keep every Bible major as well. That is what makes a Bible college. We are now looking at, we are doing groundwork on getting a business administration program together. Because more mission boards and churches are looking for people with a business administration background who have Bible and theology backgrounds as well. So we think there is a need out there. A market if you please.[65]

> My personal belief is that the first real concern of any institution is survival, regardless of what we put in the mission statements or whatever. Once an institution gains a certain amount of respect in longevity, then its major goal is survival. So I think that there are ways around it where an institution, if it's willing to look for them and to cut some of the traditions of the past, can make educational packages that are sellable.[66]

> Without a doubt we needed to increase our population. And that [addition of programs] did that. But I happen to be of the mindset that says any Christian going out into what we call the marketplace today needs to be as well prepared in the Bible as he can be, but also in terms of society and what's going on in society. So as we increased in our psychology and we increased in our sociology, for example, to prepare our pastor types . . . [67]

And finally, even from consultants, as one institution was discussing the feasibility of adding a business degree to service the mission field and denominational headquarters, it was asked, "Is there any way you can expand your base a little bit and not destroy your mission statement? Can you enlarge your curricula and still keep your mission to reach out to students that right now don't find what they need at GBS?"[68]

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[65]Don Urey, interview by author, 3 November 1993, Kansas City, tape recording, Calvary Bible College, Kansas City, MO.

[66]Ted Batson, interview by author, 5 November 1993, University Park, IA., tape recording, Vennard College, University Park, IA.

[67]Marlin Olson, interview by author, 5 October 1993, Grand Rapids, tape recording, Grace Bible College, Grand Rapids, MI.

[68]England, interview.

These external pressures placed upon the Bible college have been very effectual. Many Bible colleges have added majors to their curriculum such as business, teacher education, psychology, and social work. Descriptions of these programs place them in a complementary relationship to the standard ministry majors such as pastoral, youth ministry, world missions, church music, and church education. Some institutions, however, compromise their mission statements when new peripheral, though distantly church-related, programs are added.

Integrity of mission. In 1994, the integrity of an institution became the fifth criterion by which an institution is evaluated by the North Central Association as it seeks accreditation or reaccreditation. Institutions of higher education are asked to present evidence that institutional statements accurately describe the respective college or university and that such statements are truly consistent with its mission. As the Bible college movement bends to the pressure of the external constituencies—especially the market—it is placed in a compromising position.

Many Bible colleges which have expanded their course offerings present themselves as a Bible college in the narrowest sense of the word when in reality it reflects the image of a Christian liberal arts institution. As noted earlier, Summit Christian College (formerly Fort Wayne Bible College), changed its mission to reflect such a shift. Prior to its merger with Taylor University, Summit claimed to simply "equip persons for life and service through the Church in its world mission."[69] Summit Christian College was honest enough to reflect its breadth of mission with a very generic mission statement.

The campus visits and interviews reflected that the Bible colleges were sensitive to this issue. Some even voiced the opinion of preserving the ideals of one's mission over

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[69]Summit Christian College, Catalog of 1989-91, v.

the preservation of the actual institution. Others were concerned that some stated one philosophy and in practice served another. Four academic deans and one faculty member responded specifically to this integrity issue.

In a discussion about faculty members and administrators understanding and being committed to the college's mission, one dean championed:

> I don't want to preserve this school, I want to preserve our mission. And it seems like to me you have a lot of times schools become survival driven. If we lost our mission we ought to die, I think, instead of survive, from my point of view. Our mission is more important than our institution. And I want to keep teaching and convincing and motivating and energizing this school to accomplish that mission.[70]

In reflecting on the current cultural norms of young people as it relates to the narrow focus of the Bible college, another dean responded:

> But I think there is, especially in the day and age in which we live, when in the traditional vocational Christian service areas you find fewer young people interested in those areas and you want to attract more students, you find it is tempting to want to expand the mission, enlarge it, to include other areas. My own feeling is on the one hand, preservation of the institution is not the goal. The goal is to be effective in what your mission is. . . . And for many of us we would rather be small and focused, not that we think it is wrong to have the broader mission.[71]

Several others spoke of a college being true to its mission:

> I was pointing out to some of our administrators the other day that I think our mission statement and our program offerings are no longer in balance. Because our mission statement, as it is given, is still very specific—that we are training people for full-time Christian ministry. But our programs don't feed into that as specifically as what it says.[72]

> To me, I think they really need to decide if they want to stick with that original conviction or that original purpose that is written in our handbook that we are training for the ministry, ministry-related fields. And if they do want to stick with that, and if that is what they are going to print up in the book, then I think they need to draw the line somewhere. . . . But it does bother me to have a mission statement

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[70]Lynn Gardner, interview by author, 3 November 1993, Joplin, MO., tape recording, Ozark Christian College, Joplin, MO.

[71]George Houghton, interview by the author, 5 November 1993, Ankeny, IA., tape recording, Faith Baptist Bible College, Ankeny, IA.

[72]Burnett, interview.

> that says one thing and admissions that says something else and administrators say something else.[73]
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> So right away we are colliding with what our objective and stated purpose is . . . And if we don't broaden the mission statement [by adding non-ministry majors] of the college we are not true to our mission. To me the issue is not right or wrong, the issue is the mission statement.[74]

The Bible colleges which are serious about their mission are finding it difficult to maintain a ministry focus. The external pressures of various constituencies as well as the yearly budget challenge places the Bible college in a compromising position. The desire has been to remain focused on training students for full-time Christian ministry when in some institutions over 50 percent of the students are receiving an education which will prepare them for the secular marketplace. If any type of college or university has the responsibility to clearly articulate its mission, it is the Bible college.

The Current Status of the Bible College Mission

As the Bible college in America faces the new millenia it is confronted with a crisis of identity. For the first eighty years, up until the 1960s, the movement was very homogenous. True, there were minor differences on doctrinal issues, but the mission was very clear. The Bible institute/college existed solely to train men and women for full-time Christian service whether in the local church or cross-cultural context.

Over the last three decades the Bible college has been in a state of confused identity. The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges has itself slowly redefined the Bible college. As a result of both internal and external pressures, Bible colleges have been forced to rewrite their mission statements. For some, this redefinition has been a deathblow,

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[73]Krista Hershey, interview by author, 19 October 1993, Circleville, OH., tape recording, Circleville Bible College, Circleville, OH.

[74]Dell, interview.

while for others it has been a breath of fresh air. In either case, this self-analysis has led to broader mission statements. As the mission becomes more fluid and the constituencies become less defined, the Bible college movement finds itself in a maze of confusion.

The sun is beginning to set on the Bible college. The ideal of ministry has been overrun by the same utilitarianism which swept the historically church-related institutions of higher education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For the Bible college to remain focused is must heed the presidential words of Susan Resneck Pierce from the University of Puget Sound. As she defended the decision to release the law school to Seattle University, she challenged, "It is essential that both administrators and governing board be absolutely clear about the institution's mission, that they have the courage to act on that conviction; that they allocate resources accordingly, and that they not be deflected by external forces."[75] Sound advice for the American Bible college.

The crisis of mission has not been the only concern for the Bible college. As the movement has moved closer to the mainstream of higher education it has wrestled with issues that historically pit the secular against the sacred. Another challenge before the community of Bible colleges is to develop a philosophy for general education and regional accreditation that is consistent with its mission.

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[75]Pierce, A68.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHALLENGE OF CREDIBILITY

As the American Bible colleges have struggled with the crisis of mission, they have also faced the challenge of credibility before both their educational peers and the American public. The respect and recognition which has been gained over the last thirty years is diminished when an indiscriminate television evangelist opens a "college" or after a local church basement becomes a mill for doctorate degrees. The charge of anti-intellectualism and the presumed inferior product has been the curse of the Bible college movement since the rise of Fundamentalism in the 1920s. The search for academic respectability is an uphill struggle as the American Bible college faces the new century.

It is ironic that the Bible college movement with its strong ties to Fundamentalism should be charged with anti-intellectualism. Fundamentalism, which had its early birth pangs in the American revivalism of the mid-1800s, was born out of Scottish Common Sense Realism. Conceived by Thomas Reid, Common Sense claimed that "the human mind was so constructed that we can know the real world directly." It also appealed to nineteenth century Americans "because it provided a firm foundation for a scientific approach to reality."[1] This, added to Francis Bacon's inductive scientific method, left many future fundamentalists with a very structured and systematic approach to life—and their Scriptures. As German higher criticism descended on America at the turn of the century, these Scriptures were challenged by the Darwinian revolution. The rejection

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[1]George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 14-15.

of this revolution by the Fundamentalists as described in the second chapter eventually led to the charge of anti-intellectualism by theologians and scientists alike.

In most instances the accredited Bible colleges do little to deserve the label of anti-intellectualism. A small remnant, so to speak, frequently reinforces the backwoods, illiterate, and emotional stereotype attributed to the Bible colleges. Recently the states of North Carolina and Florida have voiced concern of their lack of control over higher education institutions which provide religious training. In the five years from 1987 to 1992, sixty new Bible colleges were established in Florida and forty-five in North Carolina. Sadly for all constituencies, these institutions are merely diploma mills manufacturing bachelor, master, and even doctoral degrees. These "schools" are not accredited by any agency recognized by the US Department of Education. Unfortunately, the public rhetoric of these administrators/pastors is smattered with a theological and educational smugness. The activities of these so-called Bible colleges sabotage any attempt by credible Bible colleges to free themselves from the charge of anti-intellectualism.[2]

The curse of anti-intellectualism is not always self-inflicted, however. In an essay explaining the "outsiderism" of fundamentalism, R. Laurence Moore describes the Bible institutes as "academically marginal."[3] This amateur status given to Bible colleges by mainstream higher education constantly triggers a defense mechanism within the Bible colleges so that there are conscious and calculated programs, curriculums, and activities which would be judged excellent in the "world's" eyes. For some Bible colleges this struggle has become easier. As administrators and faculty members begin

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[2]Joye Mercer, "Claims of Freedom of Religion Confront States Seeking to Regulate Bible Colleges," Chronicle of Higher Education, 3 June 1992, A21, 24.

[3]R. Laurence Moore, "The Protestant Majority as a Lost Generation—A Look at Fundamentalism," chap. in Religious Outsiders and the Making of America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 153.

to rub shoulders with their secular counterparts at assessment conferences, accreditation meetings, and retention workshops, a mutual respect begins to develop.

As the Bible college interacts or reacts to its stereotype within American society, there are two areas in which it has striven to gain academic respectability over the last fifty years. The first hurdle is in the area of general education and the second hurdle is that of regional accreditation. Each of these topics will be studied to show how the American Bible college has risen to the challenge in achieving academic respectability.

General Education

There are three basic components within the Bible college curriculum—Bible/theology, general education, and professional studies (the ministry major). An accredited Bible college is mandated to offer a certain number of hours in each component by the AABC for any degree program. Every student in a ministry major at a Bible college is required to take a minimum of thirty hours of Bible and theology courses and thirty-six hours of general education.[4] The remaining sixty or so hours is broken down into professional studies and electives as well as any additional hours in Bible/theology or general education.

The general education component of a college or university curriculum brings breadth to the student's academic experience and, for the most part, offers a common experience across institutions. According to Boyer and Levine, the purpose of general education is "to help students understand that they are not only autonomous individuals,

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[4]In February, 1994, at the annual meeting for the American Association of Bible Colleges in Orlando, FL., the requirement that all students at AABC institutions take thirty or more hours of Bible/theology was changed. The idea of a "non-ministry" major has now been officially acknowledged as part of the Bible college movement. Students in non-ministry majors are now required to take a minimum of twenty-one hours of Bible and Bible-related courses.

but are members of a human community to which they are accountable."[5] Based upon this definition and given the mission of a Bible college, it would seem natural that the general education component would be equal in importance to the Bible/theology core or the professional ministry major. However, early in the history of the Bible college, and even today at some institutions, the general education portion of the curriculum has been seen as the stepchild of the curriculum. On the other hand, most Bible colleges founded after World War II incorporated general education into the inaugural curriculum so that from the outset general education was a core of the curriculum, equivalent to the Bible/theology core and the professional ministry major.

For the Bible college to position itself for the fulfillment of its mission in the next century, a clear understanding of the role of general education is necessary. A coherent philosophy of general education will prepare the graduate of the Bible college to integrate faith and learning and to interact more successfully with his or her ministry constituency. With this in mind, the development of general education within the early Bible training schools will be surveyed followed by an analysis of general education within the Bible college over the last forty years.

The Development of General Education in the Bible College to 1950

The development of general education within the Bible college curriculum is tied to the dynamics involved as the early Bible training schools became Bible institutes or Bible colleges. Up until the late 1920s and early 1930s most Bible institutes had devoted themselves to training students in the practical methods of evangelizing the masses or serving the local church. A small portion of students entered these training schools from other collegiate or seminary experiences while the majority came directly

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[5]Ernest L. Boyer and Arthur Levine, A Quest for Common Learning (Washington, DC.: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning, 1980), 22.

from the print shop, schoolhouse, or farm. They followed God's call to the Bible training school with minimal formal training prior to enrollment. In any case, a student coming to the training school directly from the high school was not the common experience. According to Brereton, "A large portion of the student body possessed only an elementary education background, basic academic skills—reading, speech, composition, history, and arithmetic . . ."[6] From a general education perspective, courses in these schools were limited to English and public speaking.

In 1947, the same year that the accrediting association for Bible colleges was formed (AABC), Hubert Reynhout, Jr. completed an exhaustive study of the curriculum in ninety-eight Bible institutes. Reynhout noted that of the institutions surveyed, most had only one major—the General Bible course (or in some catalogs, the Christian Worker's course). One third of these institutes offered two additional majors or courses which included the missionary course and the Christian education course. Another fifteen schools offered additional courses of study in theology, pastoral training, and Bible/music. From a general education standpoint, the courses offered were minimal. Reynhout categorized twenty-six courses as common to the Bible institutes surveyed. Only four of the twenty-six courses could even be considered general education in nature—English, ethics, public speaking, and music. All four of these subjects were seen as essential to the training of Christian workers for future service.[7]

In Reynhout's survey, it was observed that eighteen of the ninety-eight Bible institutes were already granting bachelor's degrees. Naturally this would require at least some emphasis on the general education component. Since some of the first

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[6]Virginia Lieson Brereton, Training God's Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940, (Indianapolis, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1990), 103.

[7]Hubert Reynhout Jr., "A Comparative Study of Bible Institute Curriculums" (M.A. thesis, University of Michigan, 1947), 25.

members of the newly-formed AABC were also granting degrees, it was necessary for AABC to establish some general education criteria. These general education recommendations by AABC were based upon the minimum requirements established by the American Association of Theological Schools in 1940 for entrance into seminary. These are as follows:

> English (8-12 hrs. including Composition and Literature), Bible or Religion, Philosophy (4-6 hrs. including at least two of the following: Introduction to Philosophy, History of Philosophy, Ethics, Logic), History (4-6 hrs.), Psychology (2-3 hrs.), a foreign language (12-16 hrs. including at least one of the following : Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, German), Natural sciences (4-6 hrs. Physical or Biological), Social sciences (4-6 hrs. including at least two of the following: Economics, Sociology, Government or Political Science, Social Psychology, Education).[8]

Thus a handful of the early Bible colleges were pacesetters when it came to folding a general education component into the curriculum alongside the forty hours of Bible/theology required by AABC at that time. Other Bible colleges found it difficult to accept any more general education than was absolutely necessary to accomplish its mission. There was also the fear on some campuses that a heightened emphasis on general education would diminish the impact expected through the Bible/theology and professional ministry cores. A Christocentric model might give way to an anthropocentric curriculum. Brereton supports this analysis, "The social sciences—political science, economics, psychology, and sociology—posed the greatest threat to the Bible school view of the world, for they tended to place humanity and human concepts in the foreground, and offered naturalistic explanations of human behavior, with little or

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[8]Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges, "Academic Standards for Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges on the Collegiate Level" (Fort Wayne, IN.: AABIBC, 1947), 3; quoted in Harold W. Boon, "The Development of the Bible Colleges or Institute in the United States and Canada Since 1880 and Its Relationship to the Field of Theological Education in America" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1950), 192.

no reference to divine activity and divine history."[9] Literature, history, and science were slowly accepted into the general education curriculum, but for the most part the Bible institutes were very cautious about the social sciences and the undue attention given to mankind in the subject matter. This fear of general education was based upon the same high view of scripture which sparked the Fundamentalist/Modernist debates of the 1920s. One result of those struggles was an oversensitivity by the Bible college constituencies towards general education to the point that a Bible institute focusing on general education was considered on the "slippery slope" to secularization.

For the Bible institute, it would be considered worldly to include courses within the curriculum which were taught at other colleges and universities—*liberal* colleges and universities. Bible institute administrators who sought to slowly add general education courses to the curriculum had to be sensitive to the fact that many external constituencies viewed curricular liberalism as theological liberalism—a non-adherence to the doctrine of Christian separation. The terms "general studies" or "general education" were used in the early catalogs, but a term such as "liberal arts" would be short-lived. In 1944, the Lincoln Bible Institute which was founded to train preachers, went to great pains to clarify that an articulation agreement with the neighboring liberal arts college, Lincoln College, was simply a "contractual relationship." Lincoln Bible claimed, "We will in no way be linked to Lincoln College. We merely buy from them the services and the equipment they have to offer."[10]

By the mid-1950s, most Bible institutes had come to grips with the tension over general education. In 1955, sixty-three hours of general education was the minimum requirement for the newly introduced Bachelor of Arts in Bible/Theology from North

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[9]Brereton, 103.

[10]Lincoln Bible Institute, 1944-45 Catalog (Lincoln, IL.: Lincoln Bible Institute, 1944), 5.

Central Bible Institute (MN). The breakdown was as follows: psychology (4 hrs.), social science (10 hrs.), English (12 hrs.), speech (9 hrs.), foreign language (Greek or German, 12 hrs.), humanities (6 hrs.), natural science (6 hrs.), and music (4 hrs.).[11] These hours of general education varied from institution to institution with NCBI on the high side. Many older Bible institutes gradually added general education courses while keeping the same number of Bible/theology and professional ministry hours. In most cases this extended the three-year Bible institute into a full-fledged four-year degree granting institution. For example, NCBI became North Central Bible College within two years of adding the extensive general education core. Fort Wayne Bible Institute became Fort Wayne Bible College in 1951, the year it established a Division of General Education. Detroit Bible Institute evolved into Detroit Bible College as it developed the four year Bachelor of Religious Education degree. Not surprisingly, the majority of the twenty-one Bible colleges founded after 1950 were established as degree granting institutions with general education courses and a corresponding philosophy of general education already in place.

General Education and the Bible College: 1950-1990

The driving force behind a general education component within the Bible college curriculum was the Bible college accrediting association. True, a handful of Bible institutes began to offer degrees prior to 1950, but for the most part the establishment of AABC in 1947 had ignited the process. Sixteen Bible institutes began offering four-year degrees in the 1950s so that by 1960 twenty-six of the forty-seven institutions affiliated with AABC had adapted some form of general education core into a curriculum which had previously consisted almost totally of Bible/theology and professional

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[11]North Central Bible Institute, Catalog of 1955-56 (Minneapolis, MN.: North Central Bible Institute, 1955), 25.

ministry courses.[12] By the end of the 1960s, every four-year institution within AABC granted a degree. At variance was the manner by which these institutions pursued general education. For professional interest groups, researchers of the Bible college, and the AABC, general education in the Bible college curriculum had become a topic of primary importance.

In October 1955, a number of missions' executives met with selected representatives from the accredited institutions of AABC "to consider the mutual problem of adequate training for missionary candidates." As a comprehensive document was formulated, the general education core on a scale of importance was slotted between the Bible component and missionary training courses. "All missionary candidates should have a substantial amount of Bible; a liberal education that broadens interests, appreciations, and understandings; and the basic courses in the field of missions whether secured in one or more institutions."[13]

In 1957, professors of world missions from eleven institutions evaluated the recommendations and in the process developed a sample curriculum for students training for missionary service. With the ministry major receiving thirty credit hours and the Bible/theology core and related courses comprising forty-four credit hours, the general education component consisted of fifty-four hours or 42 percent of the total hours. This was well within the guidelines of existing degree programs at other four-year institutions where, with increased specialization in the professions, general education had decreased to between 35 and 45 percent of the curriculum.[14] Subject areas and

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[12]Douglas T. Stave, "Curricular Change in Selected Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges" (Ed.D. diss., University of Oregon, 1962), 112.

[13]Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, "Summary of Evaluation of Missions Curricula for Bible Institutes-Bible Colleges" (Wheaton, IL.: AABC, 1957), 1.

[14]Lawrence Locke, "General Education: In Search of Facts," Change, July/August 1989, 22. Locke quotes a Penn State study which found that in 1988 general education

credit hours recommended by the eleven representatives included English (9 hrs.), history (5 hrs.), social science (5 hrs.), natural science (7 hrs.), speech (5 hrs.), foreign language (12 hrs.), psychology (3 hrs.), philosophy (5 hrs.), and music (3 hrs.). This group of missions professors recommended a tight schedule with little room for electives because of the nearly two years of general education and the double major of Bible and Missionary Training.[15]

General education was also a primary concern in 1960 when Christian education programs at forty-four Bible colleges and Bible institutes were evaluated under the auspices of AABC. The goal of the Christian Education major was to prepare students to step into a church setting and successfully oversee the educational dimensions of the local church—Sunday school, adult education, staff training, etc. This study acknowledged that "more than professional training is involved in the preparation of students for full-time ministries in Christian education." In one succinct statement this study also declared the educational philosophy of many Bible colleges—"Professional training is only the apex of a pyramid which begins with a broad base of general education, rises with a substantial major in Bible and Theology, and is infused throughout with a spiritual emphasis and missionary orientation." General education was understood as the foundation on which both the Bible/theology component and the Christian education major were to be built.[16]

When this study took place, the average general education requirements varied little from the forty-five hour average at liberal arts institutions. Interestingly, all but one of the Christian education chairpersons surveyed desired additional general

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requirements comprised 37.9 percent of total degree work down from the 43 percent required in 1967.

[15]Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, "Summary of Evaluation of Missions Curricula for Bible Institutes-Bible Colleges" (Wheaton, IL.: AABC, 1957), 6-7.

[16]S. A. Witmer, "Research Report of Christian Education Programs In Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges" (Wheaton, IL.: AABC, 1964), 12.

education within which to frame their specific curricula. Paradoxically, another general conclusion was that "the content and quality of general education is a problem for academic deans and faculties as is the problem of finding a place for all subject matter and learning experiences that are desirable and essential—depending on the point of view."[17]

This last comment reflects the significant curricular aggravation caused by the addition of general education to the Bible college curriculum. The Bible colleges which had left the three-year Bible institute model in the 1940s and 1950s and became four year degree-granting institutions simply added one year of thirty to thirty-two hours of general education on top of their established diploma program. Even though this was well received by the students at a time when smaller colleges in America were growing almost geometrically, it was a shock to the faculty of the Bible colleges which for the most part still viewed their institution as a training ground for full-time Christian service. There was little excitement that literature, psychology, sociology, natural science, and additional history courses had found there way onto campus.

While this AABC report was descriptive of the Christian Education programs and their respective general education components, it also unintentionally expressed the shortcoming of the general education programs at most of the Bible institutes turned Bible colleges. A major concern glossed over by Witmer in the Christian Education study was that graduates of Bible colleges identified weaknesses in their general education experience "not only in range and adequacy of subject matter but in the quality of instruction." Yet in concluding the study, the three-year Bible institutes were encouraged by chairpersons and graduates to add additional general education. Witmer concluded, "For graduates from 3-year courses [of Christian Education] who enter directly into Christian service, it is of [only] adequate background to serve in a world

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[17]Ibid., 17.

society whose educational level is being rapidly heightened."[18] In other words, if Bible college graduates were to minister to society, they needed the same educational level of the society to whom they would be serving.

This strengthens the argument that at most Bible institutes the general education courses were simply added on to the existing burdensome Bible/theology and professional ministry curricular expectations. The fact that there was little philosophical development of the general education core became a prominent cause in the rejection of some Bible colleges as they sought regional accreditation—a topic to be discussed later. Needless to say, Bible institutes which had yet to become Bible colleges began to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of adding an additional year of general education to their curriculum. Bible institutes responded somewhat differently than did Bible colleges as they faced the tension of general education.

A case study. Two institutions which approached the challenge of general education differently were the Moody Bible Institute (MBI) and the Philadelphia College of the Bible (PCB). Both institutions had histories which dated to the pre-Fundamentalist/Modernist debates; both were urban training centers for Christian workers; and both were diploma-granting institutions with strong Bible/theology and professional ministry curricula accredited by AABC. General education compromised no more than fifteen of the ninety to ninety-six hour diploma curriculum. By the mid-1950s, MBI and PCB along with thirty-five to forty other AABC institutions stood at the same crossroads. Should a Bible training school add a year of general education to its curriculum so that the institution could become a degree-granting Bible college? Moody and Philadelphia answered this question differently.

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[18]Ibid., 18.

In 1954, the Philadelphia Bible Institute offered only fifteen hours of general education and leaders of the institution were very content for it to remain as such. This decision was explained in the 1954-55 Catalog:

> Philadelphia Bible Institute does not feel led to offer the four (or five) year program, believing that the liberal arts college is better equipped than the Bible institute to provide the varied liberal arts offerings from which the student should have opportunity to choose in furthering and rounding out his education in that field.
>
> Hence, since only three years are available to us, time is at a premium and it seems wise to us to offer only one field of specialization, namely a major in Bible book study and doctrine.[19]

By 1958, Philadelphia Bible Institute became the Philadelphia College of the Bible. The philosophy embraced four years earlier was conveniently suppressed as an additional year of general education was placed in the curriculum. By 1960, 50 percent of the curriculum was general education—59 of the 128 credit hours.[20] This was not the direction chosen by Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

For Moody Bible Institute, 1954 was special in that it was the first year of its three-year diploma program. Prior to that, MBI had offered its diploma program in a two-year, year-round format. With many of its sister institutions now offering degrees, MBI was forced to decide if it would follow suit. Dr. William Culbertson, then president of MBI, discussed his concerns in a letter to researcher Douglas Stave. Culbertson's utmost concern with the curriculum changes and the resultant shift from a Bible institute to a Bible college was the preservation of mission. Culbertson wrote:

> I would not object to the addition of a fourth year so long as the Bible Institute thrust is maintained. In this connection, I think the general education subjects would have to be very carefully chosen. I am not at all certain in my own mind that the percentage of such subjects included in the curricula of a number of schools is necessary. . . . You will understand that I am very much for the Christian liberal arts

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[19]Philadelphia Bible Institute, Catalog, 1954-55 (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Bible Institute, 1954), 32; quoted in Stave, 91-92.

[20]Philadelphia College of the Bible, Catalog, 1960-61 (Philadelphia: Philadelphia College of the Bible, 1960), 32; quoted in Stave, 92.

> college, but I dislike seeing the unique emphasis of the Bible institute lessened in this way. I am for the Christian liberal arts college, but not at the expense of losing Bible institutes.[21]

As a result of this stand by Culbertson, MBI serviced only those general education courses which had been necessary for the original diploma program. Moody followed the lead of the other Bible colleges in offering a degree, but not at the expense of adding a year of general education added to its historic diploma program. Up until 1987, the only general education department listed at Moody were the departments of language and speech, and the department of physical education. This "Area of General Education" lasted from 1963 until 1968 when the department of language and speech became the department of communications—training students in Christian journalism for ministry in print media as well as electronic media.

The degree granted by Moody from 1967 to 1991 relied heavily on the fact that students took general education courses at other institutions—secular or religious. The first degree program initiated in 1966 allowed students to obtain a B.A. by taking sixty hours of general education at other institutions. Thus, by adding two years to Moody's three-year Bible institute curriculum, a degree was possible. By 1986, this general education requirement was lowered to one year with students taking those courses not offered on the campus of MBI at neighboring Chicago institutions. Moody was able to offer a degree without owning portions of the general education curriculum—a perfect example of the perpetual secular/sacred dichotomy manifesting itself through the curriculum. Finally, in 1991, the trustee board of Moody approved a resolution of the undergraduate faculty to implement and resource all general education courses on the campus of MBI itself. Thirty-seven years after Philadelphia College of the Bible had

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[21]Letter from William Culbertson to Douglas Stave, 9 April 1962; quoted in Stave, 157-58.

articulated fifty-nine hours of general education into its degree program, Moody was prepared to service forty-six credit hours of general education into its degree offerings.

This contrast in educational philosophy regarding general education was not only true of Moody Bible Institute and Philadelphia College of the Bible. Some feared the intellectualism which was finding its way into the Bible institute movement. One administrator, already concerned that Bible colleges and seminaries were not providing a sufficient number of missionary candidates, predicted the formation of "a grass-roots movement to counteract the intellectual and academic emphasis that is being made in the Bible college world—just as in the past the Bible institute movement arose to counteract the liberalism of a past generation."[22] Columbia Bible College, on the other hand, viewed the intrusion of general education and the four year degree in the opposite fashion:

> We believe for our purposes the study of the English Bible is the core and no other studies as good or desirable as they may be will be allowed to encroach upon this. With this core untouched, then the more general education the better. Also we believe deeply that this general education must be built on and intimately related to the truth of the Word of God.[23]

Throughout the 1960s, Bible institutes such as Moody struggled with the general education component of the curriculum only to compromise by having other institutions service that portion of the curriculum. Other established Bible colleges such as Philadelphia, Columbia, and the additional twenty-one new Bible colleges which sprung up between 1950 and 1981 understood their responsibility to not only service the general education core but to integrate it into the curriculum in such a way that the entire curriculum was strengthened. Once general education was established on the

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[22]Letter from T. S. Rendall to Douglas Stave, 25 April 1962; quoted in Stave, 157.

[23]Letter from James M. Hatch to Douglas Stave, 7 April 1962; quoted in Stave, 148.

Bible college campus, the integration of these courses into the rest of the curriculum became the new challenge.

Servicing the general education curriculum. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, nearly every Bible college had an established general education core within its degree curriculum. The educational program of most students at the Bible college included thirty to forty hours of Bible/theology, forty to fifty hours of general education, and at least thirty hours in a professional ministry major. By this time most of the institutions had attempted to integrate the general education courses into and across the Bible/theology and ministry curriculum.

In 1967, Timothy Warner, chairman of the department of Missions at Fort Wayne Bible College, did a comprehensive study on the place of general education in the Bible college curriculum. His analysis of the wedding of general education or "secular" courses with ministry-related Bible and professional training courses proved interesting. From a disconcerting standpoint, Warner made several observations:

1. The general education courses at the Bible college were highly structured and highly prescribed with very little menuing and only a handful of attempts at interdisciplinary courses,
2. Twenty-three of the Bible colleges acknowledged they would place all non-Biblical or non-ministerial subjects in the category of general education,
3. There was a lack of evidence that general education courses were being integrated into the Christian world view of the students, and
4. The functional or practical approach brought to ministry-related courses was not used with the general education courses.[24]

Of these four observations, the lack of understanding general education and the related problem of integration were of most concern to Bible college educators.

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[24]Timothy M. Warner, "A Study of the Place of General Education in the Bible College Curriculum" (Ed.D. diss., Indiana University, 1967), 136-39.

From a positive perspective, Warner's study illustrated that the general education courses on most Bible college campuses were equivalent to the same courses being taught at secular colleges and universities. He also discovered that Bible colleges agreed that the general education curriculum can be a "tool" to being a better person and thus a more effective servant of God. While Warner's study showed progress being made by the Bible colleges, it also emphasized one glaring shortfall—the problem of weaving or integrating the general education content into and throughout the Bible/theology and ministry training curriculum.

The integration of the general education curriculum. The challenge of integrating truth from the liberal arts with truth predicated upon Scripture has been difficult for the Bible college since the Fundamentalist/Modernist debates of the twenties cast scriptural truth in such negative light. Or for that matter, since the Fundamentalists declared secular or natural truth irrelevant or secondary in developing the Christian for life and ministry. Warner's study proved to be a clarion call for all the Bible colleges within AABC to accept and respect the general education component as an important curricular element in preparing young men and women to minister in an increasingly progressive and literate society. Representatives of AABC have echoed Warner's sentiments. When some Bible institutes had yet to offer degrees, and English, speech, and physical education were the lone general education requirements, S. A. Witmer, the executive director of AABC, made integration a point of emphasis to member institutions. In April 1959, Witmer addressed the faculty of Moody Bible Institute on this issue. Charged Witmer, "It is very important that all the knowledge from secular areas shall be interpreted with Christian faith and Christian truth. We cannot expect pupils to be integrated if we are not integrated ourselves."[25] Moody at this time was seven years

[25]Moody Bible Institute, "Notes on Address By Dr. Witmer at Faculty Meeting, 13 April 1959" (Chicago: MBI, 1959), 1.

from initiating a degree program but over thirty years from taking responsibility for this sphere of truth as Moody students were required to matriculate at other colleges and universities to meet the general education requirements necessary for a degree.

At the twenty-seventh Annual Meeting of the AABC in 1973, the challenge of Warner's study was still gaining momentum. An excerpt from one address encouraged Bible colleges to continue making inroads:

> A change is taking place in the Bible college community today which bears a direct relevance to the effectiveness of the general education effort. A greater sense of social responsibility is rising to the surface demanding a more significant role in the total configuration of Bible college purpose. Bible colleges are, in increasing numbers, implanting in their students the conviction that the Christian, because he is a member of the human race, has inescapable responsibilities to society.[26]

Not only was this a challenge to the Bible colleges, but it served as a reminder for the Bible college to focus on its mission—serving and challenging society with the claims of Jesus Christ.

Five years later at another AABC convention, the discussion of general education took a more narrow turn as literature and writing were the topics of workshops. The importance of literature to the Bible college student was impressed upon the AABC membership:

> Students need to know, through guided instruction, that some literature pictures an idyllic world with all of its courage and bravery; some delineates a deformed and sordid world order; some fuses the two.
>
> Bible college students, especially—those who have pledged themselves to bring the message of redemption to a fallen world—need the valid insights into human personality and motives that literature can provide. Nothing is alien to the concerns of great literature. It draws upon all the academic disciplines for its resources—history, science, art, anthropology, philosophy, theology. The best literature remains always contemporary.[27]

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[26]Jacob E. Hershman, "Achieving Quality in the Teaching of General Education in the Bible Colleges" (Wheaton, IL.: AABC, 1973); quoted in AABC Newsletter 18 (Winter 1974): 13.

[27]American Association of Bible Colleges, "On the Study of Literature in Bible Colleges," AABC Newsletter 22 (Winter 1978): 8.

Warner's study in 1967 was catalytic as institutions slowly developed a philosophy of general education. The AABC leadership and its conferences continued the drive to excellence and academic respectability in this area. But time was not the simple answer. Tensions still existed on many campuses as general education hours crept into segments of the curriculum historically reserved for Bible/theology or ministry courses. Recent interviews reflect that in spite of ongoing struggles at some of the Bible colleges, an integrative philosophy towards general education is growing as is the emphasis on quality within that segment of the total curriculum.

Interview analysis. At the majority of the institutions where interviews were conducted, the topic of general education caused little arousal. Many of the established Bible colleges over forty years old had already faced the task of weaving general education into what was once a narrow Bible/training program. Bible colleges younger than forty years old had been founded as degree-granting institutions with a general education core within the initial curriculum. As a student in the early seventies and a current professor in interdisciplinary studies, one faculty member reflected on his general education experience over his twenty years of involvement in the Bible college movement:

> Now I had a decent education, I think, but it was almost all pointed to Bible, not that that is unimportant or even not the most important thing here, but when I got out of school, when I graduated from school, I knew very little about the world and I felt I had been slighted. On the other hand, Lincoln, for a long, long time, in great part because of the influence of some key faculty members here in both college and seminary, effectively communicated to the rest of the institution and the students that if we're going to make a difference, we must have a least equal time given to understanding the alternatives the world offers as well as historical and biblical grounding.[28]

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[28]Richard Knoop, interview by author, 22 September 1993, Lincoln, tape recording, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, IL.

Another faculty member, also a Bible college graduate, described the evolving philosophy of general education on his campus:

> When I was a student a year before we became fully accredited . . . general education was spoken of as a necessary evil. I think the attitude has changed somewhat. We see it as a potential productive element where we can take these opportunities to view the world through Christian eyes and talk about western civilization and try to understand our culture as it is today. I think we are using them [general education courses] as tools, but definitely tools to see our culture with Christian eyes. One phrase that we keep hearing more and more is we are always talking about exegeting the text. Now we are using general ed. as opportunities [sic] for exegeting our culture in trying to wed hermeneutics and sociology together. I think it is a productive move. At the same time trying to get us to add general ed. will be like pulling teeth.[29]

This comment by a Bible instructor emphasizes two aspects of the development of general education in 1994—general education is clearly articulated but it still faces an uphill battle for equality on some campuses.

These thoughts are further developed by two college presidents and a faculty member who acknowledge the role of general education on their campuses and the importance of integration for their students. Interestingly, the two presidents represent institutions historically noted for being quite conservative in doctrinal and Christian lifestyle issues. Each presents an integrative view of general education within the mission of a Bible college:

> We're a Bible college because all areas of discipline are weeded through the foundational truths of the Word of God—everything—English, history, social studies, whatever we are dealing with, we feel the Bible becomes the book we weed it through. It becomes our center of using properly the knowledge we are gaining and that puts value to all the other areas of knowledge. All the areas of discipline are important to us, as long as they are strained through the Scriptures.[30]

> My attitude as president is our students need to know their world. They need to know what people are thinking and why they are thinking it. So they are not going to be effective in ministry in a lost world if they don't know the world. I see that as an

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[29]Mark Moore, interview by author, 3 November 1993, Joplin, tape recording, Ozark Christian College, Joplin, MO.

[30]Alan Potter, interview by author, 15 October 1992, Owatonna, tape recording, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, Owatonna, MN.

> important part of training. It's not secondary if I may say that. It is very important.[31]

> We feel like, I'm sure others do too, but we feel like our kids are going to be dealing with a literate society out there, an educated society. If they can't use proper grammar, if they can't write well, if they can't speak well, if they don't know anything about history, and all these other things, they are going to lack credibility. And so we want to give them a general education as well as a specific [Bible] one. And that's the rationale behind it.[32]

The importance of credibility always strikes a nerve because if the future minister reflects a weak educational background it will have a detrimental effect on his or her ability to minister. One academic dean voiced his thoughts on the credibility of general education courses, especially in contrast to secular institutions. He concluded his interview by saying, "Whereas if they [the students] come through the Bible colleges, we can be criticized of shortchanging them on "worldly knowledge" so we focus pretty heavily on general education. We try very hard to see that they are not shortchanged in that area. We wrestle with that here all the time. We are wrestling with it right now."[33]

The wrestling match which takes place on some campuses pits Bible/theology and ministry advocates against the general education factions. The tug-of-war is about hours, balance in the curriculum, and educating a person versus preparing a student for ministry. At Florida Christian, a Bible college not yet twenty years old, one faculty member claimed:

> There has never been a problem here with integrating general education courses. Nobody, as I recall, has ever had to fight a battle to clear out space for general education courses. I have never even heard it debated. It is just a question of how

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[31]Donald Urey, interview by author, 3 November 1993, Kansas City, tape recording, Calvary Bible College, Kansas City, MO.

[32]William Walton, interview by author, 4 November 1993, Moberly, tape recording, Central Christian College of the Bible, Moberly, MO.

[33]Elmer Kirsch, interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, tape recording, Central Bible College, Springfield, MO.

> many hours do you have in the degree program and how can we balance the curriculum. There has never been a fight as to the legitimacy of gen. ed. courses.[34]

On the other hand, at Lincoln Christian, currently celebrating its golden anniversary, there have been some internal struggles. Historically, Lincoln has been sensitive to the key role general education plays in the Bible college curriculum being one of the first Bible colleges in the 1960s to test the waters of regional accreditation. However, as one general education faculty member states:

> There are some pretty strong disagreements between some of us in gen. ed. and some in Bible/theology. Some of the faculty in Bible/theology, for example, think that their hours through the years have been severely curtailed and cut back and they've been lost to other things. When you see the curriculum itself expanding into other majors that seems to suggest something other than a pure Bible major, that is a red flag for some of them, and they do see a slippery slope kind of process taking place here.[35]

A Bible instructor might view the situation differently from the previous comments by a general education faculty member. One Bible faculty member viewed the struggle through the lenses of the college's mission. He commented:

> We are not here to necessarily give a general education. We have nothing against general education, but well, we offer speech and we offer psychology and we offer music and we offer western civilization and American history. We have a number of generalized courses, but we have, against considerable pressure, kept these things aside from our main purpose, except to help us fulfill our main purpose.[36]

It is impossible to escape the fact that the frustration on campus is directly related to the comprehension and acceptance of the college's mission by its faculty. If the mission is broad and there are ministry majors as well as non-ministry majors on campus, there will naturally be more general education being taught across the curriculum. However, this understanding does not guarantee peace in the ranks on

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[34]Michael Chambers, interview by author, 16 February 1994, Kissimmee, tape recording, Florida Christian College, Kissimmee, FL.

[35]Knopp, interview.

[36]Wilbur Fields, interview by author, 3 November 1993, Joplin, tape recording, Ozark Christian College, Joplin, MO.

curricular issues. Faculty ownership of an institution's philosophy of general education is key to unity on campus. If such a philosophy is developed by the faculty within the rubric of a specific Bible college, then whether there is a host of general education courses offered or a more prescriptive menu of general education there will be little reaction from the major internal constituency. Unfortunately, campuses which have yet to solidify their mission tend to struggle more with this issue no matter which road it takes—breadth versus prescription. In either case, the faculty must not only own the general education philosophy but must be the ones to implement it.

General education faculty. Another concern which surfaced in the interviews, aside from the tension created by general education itself, was the difficulty in finding qualified general education faculty members to service the general education curriculum. Some of this concern is being driven by the move towards regional accreditation and part is driven by the quest for academic respectability. In either case, if the mission of the college is not to be compromised, the general education faculty must understand the ethos of the Bible college and the necessity for an integrative general education core. One academic dean lamented the difficulty in finding general education instructors:

> I know in theory you can have someone teaching history, trained in history and teaching it from a biblical point of view, it is still difficult in a lot of the secular subjects to integrate on the high school or above level, especially on a day-to-day basis, biblical truth. It is increasingly difficult to find people who have the advanced degrees to teach on your faculty in those areas where they might be Bible-believing people but they don't understand the importance of their field of study to what their convictions are.[37]

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[37]George Houghton, interview by author, 5 November 1993, Ankeny, tape recording, Faith Baptist Bible College, Ankeny, IA.

A general education faculty member believes that hiring general education instructors who understand the ethos of the college will help calm the nerves of Bible/theology and ministry professors. At his institution he claims:

> We are trying to convince faculty that we would only hire general ed. people who understand our mindset. But . . . I would say that we have had some difficulty finding the people that we regard as adequately qualified in the area of general education, that we could hire full-time who share our vision. I mean it is a concern, not merely by Bible/theology people and professional studies people or general ed. candidates, it would be a concern of all of us that that particular vision be maintained.[38]

The ethos will be better understood and an improved job of integration will take place if general education faculty members have Bible/theology backgrounds. For instance, one of the minimum job qualifications for a general education faculty member at Moody Bible Institute is "Cross-training in biblical and/or theological studies or the willingness to pursue formal training while on the faculty."[39] This cross-training has been beneficial to the Bible college movement as it has facilitated the integration of faith and learning.

While understanding the ethos of the Bible college is an important prerequisite to teach general education, Bible colleges have found it difficult to hire full-time general education instructors as a result of the very nature of the general education component in the Bible college curriculum. A specialized curriculum designed to train men and women for Christian ministry has a breadth of general education with little depth. On most campuses, general education instructors will teach 100- or 200-level courses in their discipline with little opportunity to teach upper divisional courses. At a Bible college it is very likely that an instructor of biology would only teach introductory science courses to satisfy the six hour requirement. Only an instructor committed to the

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[38]Knoop, interview.

[39]Moody Bible Institute, "Job Description: Instructor of Humanities" (Chicago: MBI, 1994) 1.

mission and the ethos of the Bible college would survive this lack of professional challenge.

This has forced most Bible colleges to service their general education courses with adjunct faculty or by other creative means. One faculty member volunteered, "The biggest problem with general ed. for us and probably other schools like us is trying to find professors when they teach one math course and one science course. Where do you find the people? You're obviously not going to hire a full-time faculty member to do all that. You look for somebody in the community, the adjunct people."[40] The full-time/part-time dilemma was answered at another Bible college by cross-training some of the Bible/theology and ministry faculty. An academic dean at a smaller Bible college admitted, "I'm going back to get my Master's in psychology. I'll have it by next December. We'll have other faculty members go and get it in history. We have a faculty member getting a Master's in English. So by the time North Central comes to look at us, we will have people with Master's degrees teaching each of our specializations."[41]

Geography also has had an impact on general education hiring. A Bible college located in a rural community might be forced to use part-time instructors who might not be members of the supporting denomination or fellowship. One Bible college was considering application to a regional accrediting agency but has rethought its intentions due to the difficulty in hiring sympathetic faculty to teach the general education courses. Other Bible colleges have compromised in hiring part-time faculty with no understanding of institutional ethos or mission to teach specialized courses. In the days ahead, Bible colleges might be forced to compromise their institutional values and hire part-time instructors who do not have any personal statement of faith.

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[40]Bruce Moyer, interview by author, 5 November 1993, University Park, tape recording, Vennard College, University Park, IA.

[41]Tom Bonine, interview by author, 3 November 1993, Kansas City, tape recording, Calvary Bible College, Kansas City, MO.

Faculty hiring, integration, and quality programs are just a few of the challenges before the Bible college movement as it interacts with the issue of general education. For the most part, American Bible colleges have come to accept and understand the role general education is to play within the curriculum. Bible colleges today require the same number of hours of general education as is expected of any student enrolled in a technical program at any secular institution. The Bible colleges with a more narrow mission have come to understand the necessity of general education in servicing its Bible/theology and professional ministry majors. The Bible colleges with broader mission statements now use general education as a foundation for ministry or non-ministry majors.

As the Bible college strives for academic respectability and acceptance into mainstream American higher education, it must continue to meet the challenge presented by general education. The campus philosophy of general education must be understood and accepted by faculty and the administration must be committed to hiring qualified faculty to service the general education courses within the rubric of the mission of the Bible college. Developing a more holistic philosophy of education with the inclusion of general education as an important element reflects the growth of the Bible college movement as a whole.

This maturing of the American Bible college comes at a time when the movement desires to take the next step towards academic respectability. A fully developed, fully integrative general education program is but the first step towards regional accreditation. Since the early 1960s, it has been the goal of Bible colleges to receive the same acknowledgment of credibility afforded secular institutions by achieving regional accreditation.

Regional Accreditation

The topic of regional accreditation has been a major issue for the Bible college movement since the establishment of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) in 1947. For many Bible colleges even the move to accreditation by AABC had been a major step. Of the fifty-seven AABC institutions founded prior to 1947, 30 percent did not achieve Bible college accreditation until 1980 or later. While some institutions were accredited by AABC within their first ten years of existence, others took longer. Two Bible colleges established in 1900 were not accredited by AABC until their eighty-fifth anniversaries.[42] Thus, it should not be surprising that institutional decisions to achieve regional accreditation would be just as deliberate.

Over the last generation, the Bible college movement has displayed a range of reaction towards regional accreditation—from fear to hot pursuit. The fear stems from the secular/sacred dichotomy born in the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy discussed in chapter two. The Bible training schools were founded to "fill the gap" where denominational colleges and seminaries had failed. If these denominational institutions had not succumbed to the "wiles of secularization," the Bible training school would not have been needed to train the young men and women to serve in the local church and its related community ministries. The common assumption has been that if the church-related institutions had not become liberal arts institutions accredited by regional agencies, there would have been less a need for the Bible training schools. Hence, it follows that the Bible training school that became a Bible college would be totally adverse to peer evaluation or control by an external agency—thus the fear of regional accreditation.

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[42]American Association of Bible Colleges, Directory, 1991-92 (Fayetteville, AR.: AABC, 1991), 47, 81.

Fear, however, turned to unabashed acceptance and even pursuit as the realities of the academic world were acknowledged. The pressures of credit transfer, recognition by area colleges and universities, and even financial aid were instrumental in arresting the fear of the Bible college towards regional accreditation. The fear of the secular had been simply the fear of the unknown. As more Bible colleges crossed the threshold of regional accreditation, others followed to the extent that regional accreditation has almost become an expectation. Needless to say, the search for academic respectability via regional accreditation has been a bumpy road for some.

The Apprehension of Regional Accreditation

In the early years of AABC, there was little thought given to the eventual problems associated with regional accreditation. The Bible colleges, having established their own accrediting agency recognized by the United States Office of Education, saw no need for regional accreditation. Life was simple then. There were no concerns over lack of credit transfers because the vast majority of Bible college graduates were stepping into ministry positions immediately upon graduation. There was little need for federal student loans as costs were low and the Bible college movement was free to chart its own course with negligible pressures from federal or higher educational authorities. More importantly, the self-image of the Bible college was healthy. The registrar of Wheaton College, a Christian liberal arts college, claimed that "with the establishment of AABC, the Bible school movement has really come of age and achieved its rightful place in American higher education."[43] The Bible colleges were beginning to sense an equality with mainstream American higher education.

This perception cannot be overemphasized in analyzing the growth and development of the American Bible college in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The leaders

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[43]Enock C. Dryness, "The Bible College and Accreditation," AABC Newsletter 2 (May 1958): 1.

and administrators of AABC and its member institutions were satisfied that the Bible college had achieved the qualitative level of most smaller liberal arts institutions. In reality, however, this goal was not realized as only seven of the best Bible colleges were regionally accredited up through 1978. Frustration, concern, and fear were natural reactions—frustration from the lack of recognition by mainstream higher education, concern that Bible colleges might have to alter their mission to gain this recognition, and fear that some, if not most, of the AABC institutions would have to change their curriculum in order to achieve regional accreditation.[44]

This fear that the Bible colleges might be asked to modify their mission to gain regional accreditation was not immediate in the late fifties and early sixties. Many of the Bible colleges had recently or were currently undergoing the AABC accreditation process, and for some, the drive for AABC recognition had been quite a public relations challenge. There was little need for another headache, especially involving a secular agency. But the six regional accrediting agencies also had their concerns. For years these agencies had examined mostly traditional institutions and the establishment of accreditation policies or criteria to deal with single-purpose or non-traditional institutions was still evolving. This included the Bible college.[45]

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[44]The AABC Newsletter reflected these attitudes throughout the sixties and seventies when discussing the issue of regional accreditation by its members.

[45]James W. Hall, "Regional Accreditation and Non-traditional Colleges," Journal of Higher Education 50 (March/April 1979): 172-73. Hall admits that "their [non-traditional colleges] great concern is whether the wider academic world will share in understanding the importance of the new college's objectives." There was concern that academe in general, unfamiliar with the non-traditional institution, was limited by its traditional view of curriculum and instruction and "single disciplinary orientation." The educational establishment might "miss the fundamental values that gave validity and meaning to the effort" of non-traditional education.

A 1958 survey by AABC of the six regional agencies proved this point. When asked, the respective secretaries of the six regional associations responded to AABC with their policies on accrediting specialized institutions. Some excerpts prove interesting:

> The New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools does not at present have a formal statement regarding the accreditation of post-secondary specialized institutions. . . . The general question of the place of the specialized institution within our Association has received considerable discussion within our Standing Committee for Institutions of Higher Education this past year, but no new formal policy has been issued.
>
> We have no separate statement on eligibility of specialized institutions for Middle States membership. If you will look . . . you will see that no specialized institution is debarred if general or liberal education forms an important, fundamental part of the educational structure.
>
> The Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools does not have any current policy regarding the accrediting of post-high school specialized institutions. There has been some discussion, however, of such a policy and procedures, and I am expecting that we will move in this direction in the near future.[46]

These responses show no lack of desire on the part of the regional accrediting associations to acknowledge the Bible colleges. The simple excuse of ignorance was understandable.

The North Central Association (NCA), however, did have a policy and it effectively eliminated many single-purpose institutions. Part of it read:

> The work offered in the specialized institution must be built upon and require for mastery the competencies gained at the high school level. Institutions offering training in skills that can be acquired without regard for previous education are not eligible for accreditation even though they may require graduation from high school for admission.[47]

The interpretation of the above policy was based solely on the evaluator's knowledge of the specialized institution. Unfortunately for the Bible colleges in North Central's

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[46]Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, "Policies of Regional Associations on Specialized Institutions," AABC Newsletter 2 (August 1958): 7-8.

[47]Ibid., 9.

region, it took twenty-two years for NCA to become acquainted enough with Bible colleges to accredit the first in 1980.

While this inconsistency of application was a frustration for the Bible colleges, especially for those in NCA's region, it was a blessing in disguise. The Bible colleges had only recently begun to develop and strengthen their general education programs and many Bible colleges would have fallen short had they sought regional accreditation. In an address at Pillsbury Baptist College in 1958, Dryness, the registrar from Wheaton who acknowledged the arrival of the Bible colleges to the mainstream of higher education, listed five hurdles which the Bible colleges would have to overcome to insure future success:

1. Inadequate conception of purposes in terms of clientele,
2. Failure to relate programs to avowed purposes,
3. Lack of intelligent short-term and long-range planning,
4. Weak financial support and/or inefficient utilization of resources, and
5. Poorly informed educational leadership.[48]

Dryness described the essentials of accreditation—mission, resources, planning, and leadership. While many of the smaller, fledgling Bible colleges tackled the above concerns, several of the more established Bible colleges chose to seek regional accreditation.

The first two Bible colleges to achieve regional accreditation were Barrington College (RI) and Biola College (CA) during the 1960-61 academic year. Both institutions had been charter members of AABC since 1947, but each responded differently to AABC upon membership into their respective regional accrediting association. Biola maintained its relationship with AABC for forty years until 1987,

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[48]Dryness, 9.

whereas Barrington left AABC in 1967, seven years after gaining membership status in the New England Association.[49]

Barrington's departure was ironic in the sense that when Bible colleges were in the initial stages of establishing AABC, Barrington's president discouraged the general idea of accreditation. He stated, "While standardization has its advantages, it also has its disadvantages, and among them is the controlling of the institution so that free enterprise is ofttimes curtailed."[50] However, shortly thereafter, Barrington helped charter AABC and later, when it attained regional accreditation, Barrington affirmed its role with AABC. Dr. Crum of Barrington challenged those Bible colleges that were becoming dually (AABC plus regional) accredited to continue their relationship with AABC because "Bible schools have greatly profited by having their own standards and accrediting association over the past twelve years and regional accreditation in no way implies that the need for AABC has been outgrown."[51] Initially, Barrington as an institution did not want any type of accreditation. It later helped charter AABC and gave it a vote of confidence by asking other regionally-accredited colleges to stay in AABC. Yet, ultimately, Barrington removed itself from AABC shortly after achieving regional status and eventually, due to financial exigencies, was forced to merge with Gordon College (MA) in 1985. Barrington College is one example to which Bible college leadership point when discussing the issue of regional accreditation—the fear of what might happen as a result.

This caution continued through the 1960s. By 1967, when Philadelphia College of the Bible (PCB) became the sixth AABC college to become regionally accredited, only

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[49]AABC, Directory, 1991-92, 128.

[50]Mostert, The AABC Story, 15.

[51]Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, "Bible Colleges Accredited by Regional Associations," AABC Newsletter 5 (May 1961): 1.

Biola remained in AABC with PCB. Four of the previous five Bible colleges had made the choice similar to Barrington's, having excused themselves from AABC, so that today only PCB remains—the others having moved into the sphere of the Christian liberal arts college. Naturally, regional accreditation became the scapegoat. Dr. Mostert of the AABC editorialized, "The pressures are upon us continually to reduce our religious distinctives, and we are very grateful to have the support of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges and its accreditation as a lever to help us resist the drift toward increasing secularization."[52]

The die was cast. For many within the Bible college movement in the late sixties, the pervading belief was that regional accreditation assured the Bible college of a slow, slippery slide down the slope of secularization. While it is true that regional accreditation did not in and of itself initiate a secularization process, in many situations it sparked a conscious change to a broader, more-inclusive mission statement. Needless to say, the regional accreditation issue was fodder for many debates at the annual AABC conventions. The frustration with the inconsistent policies of the regional associations and the fear of sister institutions leaving the fold encouraged the vast majority of Bible colleges to keep regional accreditation at arm's length. However, the Bible colleges insistent on the advantages wrought by regional accreditation continued to press forward.

The Pursuit of Regional Accreditation

In the 1960s, the Bible college movement received mixed signals of recognition from the higher education community. The positive responses encouraged the healthier Bible colleges to pursue regional accreditation. As noted previously, six Bible colleges had been regionally accredited from 1960 to 1967. Four of the six regional accrediting

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[52]John Mostert, "The Role of AABC as a Professional Accrediting Agency," AABC Newsletter 10 (Winter 1966): 8.

agencies had acknowledged the quality programs, sufficient resources, and adequate faculties and facilities of these single-purpose institutions. Only the North Central Association (NCA) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) had failed to accredit a Bible college by the mid-sixties.

Other encouraging gestures came from specific colleges and universities. At this same time at least two major universities began to transfer credits from neighboring Bible colleges. In 1961, St. Paul Bible College announced that it was granted provisional accreditation by the University of Minnesota thereby approving the quality of administration and instruction at the college. The University of Missouri at Kansas City recognized Calvary Bible College (MO) in similar fashion. The University of Missouri wrote, "We will accept transfer credits from your institution which is accredited by the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges on the same basis as regionally accredited institutions."[53] While these decisions were helpful to students at both St. Paul and Calvary, this recognition was not the stroke of regional accreditation which was desired by the members of AABC, especially those within the boundaries of the North Central region.

In 1963, the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) initiated a move which would have benefited all the AABC institutions. This step would have made the overtures to the local two-year and four-year colleges and universities by the Bible colleges unnecessary. A formal application was made by AABC for admittance into what at that time was called the National Commission of Accrediting. This commission was the umbrella organization which housed those professional agencies which accredited specific programs within a college in contrast to accrediting entire institutions. AABC

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[53]Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, "News Items From Accredited Members," AABC Newsletter 5 (August 1961): 13; Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, "News From Member Schools," AABC Newsletter 10 (Spring 1966): 7.

sought acceptance as the professional agency which accredits Bible/theology programs at the undergraduate level. The application was rejected because AABC did not accredit programs of study within regionally accredited institutions.[54] While acceptance by the National Commission on Accrediting would have placed AABC close to par with the regional accrediting agencies, the failure to gain admittance reinforced the suggestion that regional accreditation of AABC member institutions would be the only means to full academic recognition. This decision had minimal effect on the Bible colleges geographically located in regions which were already sympathetic to single-purpose institutions. However, it was the catalyst for Bible colleges to seek regional accreditation—especially with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). One such institution was Fort Wayne Bible College.

Fort Wayne Bible College and the North Central Association. Fort Wayne Bible College (FWBC) was one of the most influential Bible colleges of the twentieth century. In the establishment of the American Association of Bible Colleges in 1947, the leadership of Fort Wayne had organized the charter meeting at Winona Lake, Indiana, and its president, S. A. Witmer, later resigned to become the first executive director of AABC. With its first overtures to North Central Association in 1954, FWBC was one of the first Bible colleges to seek regional accreditation.

Four years after moving from a Bible institute to a four-year, degree-granting status in 1950, FWBC submitted a quality self-study to NCA which warranted a campus evaluation. While the visit did not result in NCA candidacy, FWBC and other Bible colleges were encouraged by NCA's willingness to consider a single-purpose institution

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[54]Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, "The Present Status of AABC as an Accrediting Agency," AABC Newsletter 12 (Spring 1968): 6.

such as a Bible college. However, as stated previously, the regional associations had no policies which fostered the accreditation of Bible colleges and other single-purpose institutions. At this same time, Fort Wayne was granted permission from the Indiana State Department of Education to establish state-certified teacher education programs. Thus, FWBC was recognized by a state agency as having met the minimum qualitative criteria necessary for certification in teacher education.[55]

In 1963, FWBC applied for and received candidate status from NCA, the first Bible college to receive such recognition. In his report to AABC, Dr. Gerig, the president of Fort Wayne, was quick to explain that FWBC was not planning to become a liberal arts college. He reiterated, "We are a Bible college, and we expect to be accredited as a Bible college. Our main purpose is to train young people for Christian vocations. We seek [regional] accreditation in order to demonstrate that the quality of education at Ft. Wayne Bible College is equal to any other types of education as evaluated by such standards."[56]

This round with NCA was more unpleasant than the first. Fort Wayne Bible College had taken great pains to educate itself as to NCA's criteria and had even sought the services of a "secular" consultant to assist in the self-study process. A team visit was recommended but postponed with a new team appointed for the evaluation visit. In 1969, as a result of the visit, FWBC was denied membership in NCA. This was a blow not only to Fort Wayne, but to every other Bible college within the seventeen state region of the North Central Association. Though FWBC had been initially "judged of such

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[55]Kenneth O. Gangel, "A Study of the Evolution of College Accreditation Criteria in the North Central Association and Its Effect on Bible Colleges" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1969). With this case study of Fort Wayne Bible College's attempt at NCA membership, Gangel became the leading authority within the Bible college movement on accreditation with the North Central Association.

[56]Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, "News From Member Schools," AABC Newsletter 8 (Spring 1964): 10.

quality as to merit an examination," the final evaluative visit by NCA concluded that "the overall strength [of FWBC] now merits no recognition at all" even though NCA positively stated that "progress had been made in developing the institution."[57] Fort Wayne had been rejected a second time because of the misunderstandings of the Bible college by the NCA evaluation team. Naturally this caused a stir within the membership of AABC.

The AABC and regional accreditation. The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges tried to understand why its member institutions were having such difficulty in obtaining regional accreditation, especially within NCA and SACS. AABC proposed three reasons the regional evaluation teams experienced difficulty in evaluating a Bible college program. One reason discussed previously in a different venue was the strong general education or liberal arts background of the consultant evaluators. As accreditation team members stepped onto most Bible college campuses, the curricular contrast was rather stark as the heavy emphasis on Bible and professional courses was quite unusual. Another related explanation, simple but important, was that the evaluators did not know or understand the mission and objectives of the Bible college. For a Bible college to be an "unknown quantity" at the outset of the accreditation process was definitely not to its advantage. A third reason espoused by AABC was that evaluators might have less sympathy with Bible college objectives or its basic philosophical presuppositions. To many within higher education, the theistic world view of the Bible college was completely antithetical to what some in academe considered viable to insure true academic freedom. Thus, since academic freedom was and is a cornerstone of American higher education, any threat to

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[57]Jared F. Gerig to Norman Burns, 8 May 1969, quoted in Gangel, 199.

this intellectual freedom would be just cause for disqualification in the accreditation process.[58]

The Bible college was placed at a disproportionate disadvantage in the regional accreditation process as it struggled to understand the evolving qualitative criteria being introduced by NCA and SACS. The Southern Association confirmed the position of the Bible college in its report on "Colleges with Special Religious Commitments." In an effort to preserve the integrity of higher education, SACS proscribed six questions to aid evaluation committees as they visited Bible colleges. Of note is the emphasis on intellectual freedom in contrast to theological tenets of the faith. The six "charges" to an accreditation team were:

1. Is the stated purpose worthy of higher education?
2. Does the institution pursue indoctrination or education?
3. Is the student permitted to embrace a divergent theological view?
4. Is the theological conformity a requirement for appointment to faculty? for admission as a student? for graduation?
5. Has the institution exhibited integrity and candor relative to its purpose in all policies, publications, recruitment . . .?
6. Has the institution endeavored to establish a creative, inquiring kind of environment? or has the inbreeding of faculty and staff closed the door to anything "foreign"?[59]

For most Bible colleges, a loose interpretation of the above questions by the accrediting agency would have assured the Bible colleges of regional accreditation. However, according to some within the Bible college movement, a strict interpretation and corrective response would have required a Bible college such as Fort Wayne to shift its mission and objectives.

Fort Wayne Bible College and its relationship to the North Central Association was an excellent case study for the AABC colleges which were seeking regional accreditation

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[58]Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, "The Present Status of AABC as an Accrediting Agency," AABC Newsletter 12 (Spring 1968): 6-7.

[59]Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, "The Accreditation of Bible Colleges and Colleges with Special Religious Commitments," n.d., quoted in Gangel, 186.

in the 1960s. The dissertation written by Kenneth Gangel, then academic dean of Calvary Bible College, became the warning manual of what Bible colleges were to expect when seeking candidacy with either NCA or SACS. He challenged his sister institutions of AABC to not apologize for their bibliocentric view of education, to continue their pursuit of higher academic standards, and to advance the definition of a Bible college to the higher education community. The experience of Fort Wayne described by Gangel on the heels of its rejection by NCA helped Bible colleges to refocus their efforts in their search for academic respectability.[60]

The encounter of Fort Wayne with NCA was not the final chapter for Bible colleges as they sought regional accreditation. A brighter and happier ending awaited the Bible colleges. By the mid-1970s, both AABC and the resolute regional agencies—NCA and SACS—made policy decisions which placed both groups on a more equal plane. In January 1975, AABC became a member of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). COPA was the new organization of accrediting agencies formed to foster and facilitate the roles of both institutional and specialized accrediting agencies in promoting and insuring the quality and diversity of American postsecondary education.[61] Prior to 1975, the regional accrediting associations had their own group (FRACHE-Council of the Federation of Regional Association Commissions on Higher Education) while the professional accrediting groups representing business, teacher education, Bible colleges, and many more were members of the National Commission on Accrediting. COPA, in essence, joined the two groups, placing Bible colleges with the regional associations in the same national agency charged with the oversight of accreditation.

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[60]Gangel, 175.

[61]American Association of Bible Colleges, "COPA Now A Reality," AABC Newsletter 19 (Spring 1975): 5.

The benefits gained by AABC with the formation of COPA were potentially very favorable. AABC stated:

> One practical result will be that accreditation by AABC will be recognized equally with that of other institutional agencies (such as the regionals). This should help eliminate some problems that still exist in the matter of transfer of credit, unconditional acceptance of Bible college students by theological seminaries and graduate schools, and approval by statewide agencies.[62]

While in retrospect these benefits did not become reality to the degree originally hoped, AABC institutions did profit by their association with the regional agencies and the systems of coordination and cooperation which developed.

The mixing of the regional agencies and AABC within COPA paid dividends as the regional associations began to redefine many of the accreditation criteria. It was noted previously that Fort Wayne had struggled with the new qualitative, more subjective criteria. This criteria developed, especially in the North Central region, to the point where an institution was evaluated on its success in meeting its own stated objectives rather than a list of requirements mandated by the respective regional accrediting association. In this light, the president of Empire State College (NY) expressed his support for single-purpose institutions such as the Bible college:

> Non-traditional colleges have emphasized the importance of educational outcomes—of what a student accomplishes as the result of study. . . . By focusing evaluation on the effectiveness with which a college achieves missions and goals set by itself, accreditation has shifted its focus squarely to educational issues. The ultimate benefactor is the student.[63]

The North Central Association itself echoed these thoughts as its evolving criteria affected the single-purpose institution:

> Specialized institutions have assumed an increasing importance in American higher education, and the configurations of resources and organization appropriate to them have not always been comparable to those traditionally found in four-year colleges

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[62]American Association of Bible Colleges, "COPA—New Council Now Underway," AABC Newsletter 19 (Winter 1975): 9.

[63]Hall, 176-77.

> and universities. In the early seventies the Commission [NCA] joined with the other postsecondary regional accrediting commissions in adopting a set of "conditions of eligibility," which in effect described the general kinds of institutions that would be considered by the regional commissions for accreditation, thus delimiting the scope of regional postsecondary accreditation.[64]

As far as AABC institutions within the North Central region, this was a watershed policy statement made by NCA. It had immediate effects within NCA and spilled over to SACS as nineteen of twenty-one Bible colleges became regionally accredited or candidates for accreditation through either of those agencies from 1980 to 1989.[65] Prior to 1980, only seven Bible colleges had been accredited—none with NCA or SACS. The North Central Association's inclusion of and adaptation to the specialized institution such as the Bible college had created a tidal wave of response.

St. Paul Bible College and the North Central Association. The first beneficiary of NCA's evolving criteria was St. Paul Bible College (SPBC). While Fort Wayne Bible College has been described as a victim of the change within NCA, St. Paul and other Bible colleges can be considered as beneficiaries of the change. Unlike Fort Wayne, SPBC was denied candidacy to NCA in 1963. On the other hand, St. Paul was not as prepared as Fort Wayne had been. St. Paul had an inadequate library for liberal arts and general education, a poor philosophy of general education, a weak financial position, and an overworked, undertrained, and underpaid faculty. All were problems faced by the typical Bible college in the sixties. By 1974, however, St. Paul had gained candidate status and as a result of a subsequent self-study and campus evaluation was granted NCA membership in 1980. St. Paul Bible College was the first Bible college granted

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[64]Thurston E. Manning, "Commentary on the 1981 Criteria of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education," NCA Quarterly 55 (Spring 1981): 384.

[65]Norman D. Rempel, "A Descriptive and Comparative Study of General Education in the U.S. Bible College Curriculum, 1967-91" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, 1992), 238-39.

accreditation by NCA, having followed the trail blazed by Fort Wayne Bible College which finally became a member of NCA in 1985.[66]

Through the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, those Bible colleges which pursued accreditation did so under the watchful eye of AABC. The apprehension over regional accreditation faded as a handful of Bible colleges were recognized regionally outside of the North Central and Southern Associations. These two regional associations, in contrast to the other four, were tardy in recognizing not just Bible colleges but other specialized or non-traditional institutions as well.[67] The primary concern, brought to light by Gangel and accentuated by Cocking, was the intellectual climate of the specialized institutions. The question facing the Bible college was its capability of training and educating the collegiate student in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom within the constraints of a more defined theological dogma. Once Bible college officials and leaders of the regional accrediting agencies interacted within the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, the expectation of each side became more evident. Fort Wayne Bible College's quest for NCA membership was the trial balloon by which all other Bible colleges measured their chances or willingness to seek regional accreditation. St. Paul Bible College then led the charge to regional accreditation so that by January 1991, thirty-three American Bible colleges, or close to one-third of the AABC membership, were either regionally accredited or candidates for regional accreditation.[68]

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[66]Herbert Cocking, "Bible College Accreditation by the North Central Association: 1970-1980" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1982). Cocking followed Gangel's dissertation with another case study involving a Bible college and the North Central Association.

[67]There are some within AABC who also claim that the Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools (NWACS) was slower to be accepting of non-traditional colleges. It is difficult to compare with so few Bible colleges seeking regional accreditation in the smaller Northwest region as compared to the many involved with NCA or SACS.

[68]Rempel, 238-39.

In 1947, at the founding of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, if someone had predicted the extent of Bible college accreditation by regional agencies fifty years later, he would have been charged with false prophecy. In truth, however, the American Bible college has moved from a fear of secular accrediting agencies to a justifiable pursuit of accreditation via the regional associations. Within AABC, the question of regional accreditation no longer triggers hot debates as it once did—on the contrary—dual accreditation is quickly becoming the expectation.

The Expectation of Regional Accreditation

With institutions like St. Paul Bible College and Fort Wayne Bible College having led the charge for regional accreditation with the North Central Association, many American Bible colleges have since hopped on the bandwagon. All but six of the twenty-four Bible colleges visited for this study are either members, candidates, or in the initial discussion stages with regional accrediting agencies. These institutions were driven by the advantages gained from regional accreditation which were complementary to the benefits afforded by AABC. The ease of credit transfer, the increased academic credibility, the availability of foundational grants and/or matching gifts, and the aid in the recruitment of students were all enhanced by the attainment of regional accreditation. That is not to say, however, that lingering concerns as to regional accreditation did not exist.

Based on information obtained in the interviews during the campus visits, the chief concern of Bible colleges in general towards regional accreditation was the presumed loss of independence which would result. The worst case scenario was described by one academic dean to another. "He said, 'Just wait. They [NCA] have been easy on you at the beginning, but then they will put the screws on you in order to maintain accreditation a

few years down the road. . . . I have been watching this [regional accreditation of Bible colleges] too many years and I saw it happen'"[69]

Others have described this loss of independence in other ways. The idea of a "slippery slope" developed with respect to a shift in mission. One academic dean recounted his experience at a Bible college from earlier in his career. Upon receiving regional accreditation he explained:

> So we rejoiced and jumped up and down and clapped our hands. It is a great thing. That was how regional accreditation came about then. And then of course we could train public school teachers and from ever on after we were hassled by the regional association in this little detail and that little detail. If you change this, if you change that, if you modify that, if you do this, if, if, if. So the first thing you know, you have a school a whole lot different from the original mission of the school than which the founders intended.[70]

This same impression of outside control was given by a faculty member at another Bible college. He stated:

> They [the regional accrediting agency] could . . . once we get into that situation, there is the possibility they can make more demands here and there and we begin to bow down to them because it will hurt us. Then, if suddenly we lose the accreditation, that becomes a psychological defeat in the eyes of the students who are coming here.[71]

The resulting probationary status or loss of accreditation, from this perspective, would be more damaging than not maintaining autonomy and bypassing regional accreditation in the first place.

The habit of pointing fingers at other Bible colleges which have "slipped" from their founding mission as a result of regional accreditation is nothing new. A long time general education faculty member observed:

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[69]Earl Sims, interview by author, 18 October 1993, Cincinnati, tape recording, Cincinnati Bible College, Cincinnati, OH.

[70]Kirsch, interview.

[71]William Dowell Jr., interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, tape recording, Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO.

> I don't think we ever had that antagonism toward [regional] accreditation like some of our sister colleges have. I mean, it just permeates their entire psyche. That accreditation means that you have left the faith. You have, you've denied the faith. Just look at what history has done to all of our older church-related schools that started out as Bible colleges, look at the route they have gone.[72]

While very sympathetic to regional accreditation, this faculty member still reflected the fear or concern that regional accreditation could be the initial cause in Bible colleges becoming something other than their original intended purpose.

This fear of lost autonomy is a common concern amidst the discussion of regional accreditation. It was a concern of many Bible colleges in achieving initial accreditation with AABC as evidenced by the fact that it took two of the Bible colleges eighty-five years to seek AABC membership.[73] For the most part, this fear of accreditation has been the primary concern voiced by the external constituencies of the Bible college movement. Bible college administrators have attempted to diffuse such worries by appealing to the examples of other single-purpose institutions which were able to maintain their specific mission in spite of regional accreditation. The General Motors Institute, the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the DeVry Technical Institutes are examples within NCA of non-Bible college, single-purpose institutions used to persuade apprehensive constituencies that regional accreditation did not initiate a change in mission. Cocking's study shows that as the fears of regional accreditation began to subside, attention shifted to the many benefits to be accrued through regional accreditation.

In the early 1980s, in his study of the Bible college and its relationship with NCA, Cocking polled forty-seven AABC academic deans of non-regionally accredited Bible

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[72]Janet Shaw, interview by author, 22 September 1993, Lincoln, tape recording, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, IL.

[73]God's Bible School and College (OH) and Practical Bible College (NY) were both founded in 1900 and achieved AABC accreditation in 1985 and 1986 respectively.

colleges. Twelve institutions confirmed that they were seeking regional accreditation and ten acknowledged their consideration of such a move. Seventeen Bible colleges claimed that they would not seek regional accreditation while eight were unsure.[74] By the early nineties, ten to twelve years later, the vast majority of Bible colleges have considered regional accreditation with 30 percent having attained full membership. Several reasons for the pursuit of regional accreditation came to light during the campus visits.

A most important advantage of regional accreditation is the immediate recognition of quality it conveys to other members of the higher education community. One of the dreams of AABC at its inception was that member colleges would be acknowledged as quality academic institutions by their secular and church-related counterparts in the mainstream of American higher education. This did not happen. When AABC became a member of COPA in 1975 alongside the regional agencies, AABC assumed that its member institutions would be recognized on the same level as any other institution of higher education in America. While COPA membership served Bible colleges by acquainting them with the regional accrediting agencies and indirectly assisting some Bible colleges in achieving regional accreditation, COPA membership failed to give AABC and its member institutions the recognition and academic respectability it longingly desired. Credit transfers were still difficult in certain parts of the country and some Bible colleges had no option but to seek regional accreditation.[75]

One faculty member and former academic dean analyzed AABC's frustration with COPA and regional accreditation this way:

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[74]Cocking, 88.

[75]The family members of this writer were perfect examples of these difficulties. In 1974, this writer and his spouse received twenty-five to forty hours in credit transfer to a state university. Ten years and three siblings and their spouses later, zero credits were transferable from the same Bible college to the same state university in spite of excellent academic records at both institutions.

> There was a time when AABC was thought to be sufficient in some people's minds, or in the student's perception, it may not be sufficient. So a regional accreditation may be very beneficial. I think what has happened with COPA has been somewhat troubling, particularly to small Bible colleges like Circleville, who look to umbrella agencies like COPA and AABC under COPA as somewhat giving us some strength and support. And when we see that beginning to crumble away, I think North Central becomes more and more a necessity.[76]

The ebb and flow within AABC and COPA, the fact that COPA did dissolve in December 1993, and the fact that the higher education community was still reluctant to acknowledge a Bible college without regional accreditation forced the issue at many Bible colleges.

As Bible colleges moved into the arena of secular accreditation, it would be difficult to rank the various reasons for they were so interrelated. The chief reason, a confirmation of Cocking's study, was the desire for academic respectability from the secular higher education community. One president of an independent Baptist college, who did a three-year feasibility study on the benefits of regional accreditation, discussed the issue of credibility at length:

> We did a lot of work on it [regional accreditation]. It's not something I entered into lightly. I felt the three years were valuable to discover if we felt as a Bible college it was necessary for us to gain horizontal credibility. . . . In the United State, one of the systems that has been developed to help add credentials just on a horizontal basis, it doesn't guarantee them, it only adds, but it does not guarantee them, is accreditation. And we felt that there was no compromise involved, but instead there would be extreme help in the mechanical area of education by being accredited.[77]

A music faculty member, formerly of Pillsbury, reflected:

> I think that people on the outside have a very dim view of Bible college academics. I did. . . . I didn't find that true at Pillsbury and I don't find that true here. But the image is out there that Bible colleges are weak academically and I think having NCA accreditation will be beneficial to our students. And it is good for us to work, to wrestle through what we are about, why we are here, to put things down on paper, to do the self-study, to look at what our weaknesses are and what we can do to address

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[76]David Case, interview by author, 19 October 1993, Circleville, tape recording, Circleville Bible College, Circleville, OH.

[77]Potter, interview.

> those weaknesses. It is good for us. It stretches us; it makes us go into the right direction.[78]

Regional accreditation would benefit the Bible college and its students as well as recognition from the academic community.

Interlaced with this goal of academic respectability is the concept of accountability. Regional accrediting agencies challenged the sometimes weak academic standards which were characteristic of some Bible colleges. A self-study coordinator echoed these thoughts on accountability and NCA:

> Now North Central doesn't know us from Adam. They send a team in here who doesn't even understand, most of them, what a Bible college is all about. They come in expecting a whole range of things, some of which we were able to do and some we weren't. You say this is your mission, but how is this following-up, and what are your outcomes, and how do you know that you are doing this, and why do you have your resources over here if you say your mission is over here. Just really serious questions about what we are trying to do. And that's why I think for me, North Central was one of the best things we ever did, because it forced us to examine ourselves. That's my philosophical interpretation.[79]

The chair of a pastoral studies department appreciated the pressure from the North Central Association for improved faculty development at his institution. As to the accreditation process he concluded:

> It was good because, first of all, we wanted those [faculty] to teach within their majors—instructors to teach within their major fields. They wanted to make sure that they had the educational degrees that were needed. Also the practical experience. They wanted to make sure that the school was giving some type of in-service to help them to keep up and in their major fields all the seminars going on, working on their doctorates and these things. And so I think it was a plus for the school, a plus for the whole constituency so that all the money isn't diverted and even then we have to work at it. That all the money isn't diverted just in buildings and programs, but it's in the personnel.[80]

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[78]Darrel Bevis, interview by author, 5 November 1993, Ankeny, tape recording, Faith Baptist Bible College, Ankeny, IA.

[79]Thomas Tanner, interview by author, 22 September 1993, Lincoln, tape recording, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, IL.

[80]James Allen, interview by author, 28 October 1992, Minneapolis, tape recording, North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, MN.

The self-study for NCA at North Central Bible College served its purpose well. At the time of the initial visit only three full-time faculty and three full-time administrators had earned doctorates. Six years later, following its achievement of full membership into NCA, fifteen faculty members and one administrator had either received their doctorates, were candidates, or were enrolled in a doctoral program.[81] Other institutions have followed the lead of North Central Bible College and have strengthened the academic credentials of their faculty before even seeking regional accreditation.

Another topic which surfaced when discussing accountability was the issue of credit transfer. For some Bible colleges, the fact that credits would not easily transfer to secular and even Christian liberal arts colleges and universities became an issue of institutional integrity. If an institution, especially a Bible college, could sell a four-year degree program to a prospective student and subsequently, upon graduation, could not transfer the academic credit then that institution's integrity could legitimately be questioned. From 1975, a Bible college's membership in COPA by virtue of its membership in AABC proved insufficient clout for credits to be accepted by many public and private universities. Therefore, in an attempt to service its students, it became necessary for many Bible colleges to seek regional accreditation.

A faculty member at Lincoln Christian College spoke to the integrity issue and the responsibility of the college. He summarized:

> They [the students] were tired and we were tired of periodically having a student try to get into a university some place and being told sorry, the name of the school doesn't appear in my little book here, that's too bad. And so there was a sense of moral responsibility, I think, as much as anything, as well as a sense of wanting adequate and commensurate recognition for what we felt we were doing, and having that kind of certification was something that was good. And so I think that that had

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[81]North Central Bible College, 1991 NCA Self-Study (Minneapolis, MN.: North Central Bible College, 1991), 8-10.

> developed to such a point that many people saw it as a real advantage and not as a threat.[82]

The academic dean at North Central Bible College described the never-ending scenario on his campus:

> When I first became dean, I found alumni who wanted to enter graduate schools. It's the story you know. And I said it so many times on the phone, I almost wanted to say, "May I turn my tape recorder on? AABC is in COPA and these other [regional] associations are also. And there is an understanding that credits will transfer and all that, so. . . ." And yet here's a registrar sitting somewhere working, or dean sitting somewhere and they are saying, if you do not have regional accreditation we're not accepting your credits, that is our college's policy. And I go through this and other alumni have done this, and they have done that. When we got candidate status with NCA, it stopped. . . . So the credibility in the academic community of regional versus AABC is no comparison. That was worth all the effort for the sake of our students, cause they are paying just as much money, now they have something that is of quality.[83]

This servicing of students by making their credits transfer more easily was a primary force in many a Bible college's decision to seek regional accreditation.

Another driving force for regional accreditation has been the intense competition for new students. One of the results of the Bible college crisis in mission has been the closer alignment of the Bible college with the Christian liberal arts college in both mission and curriculum. In some geographical areas both the local Bible college and the Christian liberal arts college offer the same majors such as teacher's education or youth ministry. Without regional accreditation the Bible college had found itself at a recruitment disadvantage. One former academic dean was very candid in explaining his institution's choice of NCA accreditation. He stated, "Well, I tell you, the major one [reason] was enrollment." He went on to explain that in his geographical area there were two Christian liberal arts colleges, one other Bible college, a community college,

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[82]Knoop, interview.

[83]Donald Meyer, interview by author, 27 October 1992, Minneapolis, tape recording, North Central Bible College, Minneapolis, MN.

and a state university. At his institution of 125 full-time students the decision to achieve NCA accreditation was a simple matter of survival.[84]

Another academic dean admitted that the impetus behind his institution seeking membership in NCA was competition. He explained that as Bible colleges achieved regional accreditation this fact became an integral part of any recruitment effort. Naturally, any Bible college without regional accreditation was inferred to be somewhat inferior, which made recruitment especially tense and difficult between sister colleges within their respective denominations.[85] Survival, then, became another reason for the rush of Bible colleges seeking regional accreditation over the last fifteen years.

For a small minority of Bible colleges, regional accreditation has remained out of the question. Overcoming the barrier of the sacred and the secular and convincing the respective constituencies of regional accreditation's advantages would prove too damaging to some of the Bible colleges. However, many within the Bible college movement would agree that the positive effects of regional accreditation outweigh the negative.

A recent study described the benefits of regional accreditation as an increased emphasis on the integration of Scripture into the curriculum, an increased involvement of faculty with the curriculum, an overall improvement of academic standards, and a greater diversity of course offerings and majors.[86] Moore's study discounted the fear of many Bible college leaders as he noted little change in the religious life and practice on

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[84]Marlin Olsen, interview by author, 5 October 1993, Grand Rapids, tape recording, Grace Bible College, Grand Rapids, MI.

[85]Michael Pabarcus, interview by author, 1 November 1993, Florissant, tape recording, St. Louis Christian College, Florissant, MO.

[86]David D. Moore, "The Perceived Effects of Regional Accreditation Among Selected Fundamentalist and Evangelical Christian Colleges" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Florida, 1990), 177.

Bible college campuses now regionally accredited. Nevertheless, there is still the underlying apprehension or second-guessing as to whether the regional accreditation of a Bible college will cause irreversible harm. An administrator at a Bible college dually accredited with SACS and AABC summarized the current status of many Bible colleges in the same position. In writing to his peers he warned:

> Whenever we deal with regional accrediting agencies, we need to be very aware of the values base from which our colleagues in these agencies function. We also need to be crystal clear regarding the boundaries within which we can move without compromising those commitments that make us distinctively biblical and Christian and define our institutional reason for being. We must constantly remind ourselves of our counter-culture posture—a posture we assume as Christians—and the commitment of accreditors and accrediting structures to assess all institutions on the basis of majority cultural values. Let us carefully assess what price we will pay for recognition by the larger academic community. Regional accreditation inevitably will draw us toward the model of the secular liberal arts university and away from our distinctives as biblical and theological educators.[87]

This Bible college administrator has resigned himself to the fact that a regionally accredited Bible college is doomed to some form of liberalization. Yet, the fruits of such a choice have been much too advantageous to not have been partaken. By 2000, only a handful of Bible colleges will have eschewed regional accreditation and by then the effects of choosing regional accreditation will be much clearer.

The entire issue of accreditation has been a dilemma for most Bible colleges. In the 1940s, there was the fear that a Bible college accrediting association would threaten the independence of the small Bible college. Once that fear subsided and the Bible colleges within the movement understood that accrediting agencies were advocates for quality education and not adversaries, the Bible colleges sought recognition from the broader higher education community. Frustrated by the lack of uniform policy between the six regional accrediting agencies, the hopes of equality rested in the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. Finally as reality settled in, the American Bible college

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[87]Robert Ferris, "Accreditation: A Mechanism For Change—For Good or For Ill?" AABC Newsletter 37 (January 1993): 6.

acknowledged that Bible college accreditation was a different type of accreditation than regional accreditation. To gain the benefits of regional accreditation and to protect their respective institutional integrity and credibility, most Bible colleges have chosen membership with the regional accrediting associations. The challenge of the future will be to maintain the distinctives of the Bible college while marching to the beat of the regional agencies.

The Acceptance of the Challenge

As the American Bible college has struggled internally with its crisis of mission, it has also had to wrestle externally in its challenge for credibility. This test has stretched and matured the Bible college in several ways. First of all, the separation of the secular and the sacred has given way to an integrative approach of education which respects God's truth found in all disciplines as well as the Scripture. The step has allowed the Bible college to overcome its institutional inferiority complex and operate within the higher education community confident that it can be as mission-driven and as quality-conscious as any other college or university. The development of a comprehensive general education program has permitted the Bible colleges to enter the mainstream of higher education by means of regional accreditation.

The path of regional accreditation, however, has not been an easy one. Once satisfied with the accreditation of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC), the Bible college movement was forced to admit that regional accreditation was necessary. At issue was not only the credibility concerns, but those of integrity. If the academic credits of a Bible college failed to transfer, then it was the responsibility of the Bible college to insure such a transaction at any cost—including regional accreditation. As seen in the interviews, some campus constituencies are still split on this issue, but as more and more Bible colleges seek regional accreditation it has become less divisive. Regional accreditation enhances the credibility of the Bible college movement.

Nevertheless, the road to academic respectability has been rocky for many Bible colleges—with some falling by the wayside. The question remains, however, as to the effect this newfound confidence will have on the Bible colleges themselves. Does a breadth of mission, a holistic general education curriculum, and regional accreditation doom a Bible college to a slow secularization process on par with the past exemplars of Harvard, Yale, and the hundreds of other once staunchly church-related institutions? The threat of secularization combined with a crisis of mission presents the Bible college movement with a new challenge for the future.

CHAPTER 5

THE CURRENT OF CHANGE

In November 1991, the minister of Harvard University's Memorial Church stood on the steps of the chapel and proclaimed to a cheering crowd, "I am a Christian who happens as well to be gay." The Rev. Peter Gomes, who had been pastor of the campus church and Plummer Professor of Christian Morals since 1974, publicly acknowledged his sexual orientation in reaction to a "moral mugging" and a "particularly virulent form of homophobia" encouraged by a conservative student magazine on Harvard's campus. In the aftermath of this battle of values, a student leader of the campus gay and lesbian organization proudly affirmed, "Harvard and homosexuality are intertwined."[1]

While this episode and its subsequent student analysis might not surprise many observers of American higher education, it does incite certain questions as to how and why this set of events and others similar to it would characterize so many once proudly church-related institutions. What has caused private colleges and universities of Protestant and Catholic stripe alike to yield to such societal norms of morality which at one time would have been in sharp contrast to the sponsoring denomination's teaching on such issues? A less complex example might be the demise of compulsory chapel at many denominational colleges. In a period of sixteen years, 1910 to 1926, not only were Yale students exempted from required chapel services, but Sunday worship was no longer compulsory. Over the next generation, most private church-related colleges and

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[1]Campus Culture Wars: Five Stories About PC, produced and directed by Michael Pack, 90 min., Manifold Productions, 1993, videocassette; Richard N. Ostling, "Christians Spar in Harvard Yard," Time, 16 March 1992, 49.

universities followed Yale's example and adopted the basic philosophy that "the End of Compulsion is the Beginning of Religion."[2] Such choices, however, began to blur the intended mission and the corresponding distinctives of these colleges and universities.

The secularization of these former church-related colleges and universities has been a recent topic of scholars observing trends within evangelical higher education. Marsden, Longfield, Burtchaell, and Guthrie are just some who have laid the foundation, having analyzed colleges and universities which today would be considered distantly or marginally church-related. From their perspective, during the second half of the nineteenth century, most private colleges were related to a founding Protestant denomination and for the most part were tightly controlled by them. The majority of the trustees were members of the clergy, the presidents were clergymen, and the clergy was well represented on the faculties.[3] The mission of the college was presented in such a way so as to reflect the doctrinal tenets of the institution. This changed, however, as state land-grant colleges and newly established research universities such as Stanford, Chicago, and Johns Hopkins appeared on the scene of American higher education. This boon had an effect on those colleges steeped in the Protestant ethic as the ideological pressures from the research institutions filtered down to them. Stanton explains, "In the late nineteenth century, religion allied itself with the natural and social sciences in the social gospel, an intellectual movement confident that knowledge and the scientific method would address the world's ills and elevate the dignity of humankind by having

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[2] Yale Alumni Weekly, 35 (February 26, 1926), 630-31; quoted in Bradley J. Longfield, "For God, for Country, and for Yale: Yale, Religion and Higher Education between the World Wars," in The Secularization of the Academy, eds. George M. Marsden and Bradley J. Longfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 154.

[3] James Tunstead Burtchaell, "The Decline and Fall of the Christian College," First Things 12 (April 1991): 16-21.

work and helping less fortunate achieve their share of the world's resources."[4] Consequently, many colleges and universities originally sharing a Protestant frame of reference began a slow evolution from a Christocentric to an anthropocentric view of man and society.

This drift is acknowledged by Longfield as he reflects on Yale University. Comparing the clergy-run university of the mid-1800s to the academic climate of the 1920s, he comments:

> . . . by the 1920s the rise of the university had transformed the shape and nature of higher learning. Nineteenth-century colleges concentrated on the development of the intellect and character under the umbrella of religion and moral philosophy, but the new universities stressed research, academic specialization, and a diverse curriculum. . . . Religious influences had accordingly been moved more and more from the center of the academic enterprise to its periphery.[5]

This shift had a detrimental effect on church-related institutions.

Over sixty years later, in the late 1980s, Guthrie analyzed three church-related colleges as to the aftereffects of the institutional doctrinal distinctives having been moved to the periphery of the campus culture. In tracing "the development of the interplay between institutional distinctiveness and adaptation at three Presbyterian-related colleges," Guthrie sheds interesting light on the issue of adaptation, accommodation, drift, or some might say, secularization. One of his basic conclusions is that these adaptations "eventually produced . . . institutions that were historically church-related, but currently imitated most non-sectarian institutions." One example of such was the hiring of faculty and administrators who did not share the educational philosophy of the once distinctively church-related institutions. This made it easier for the colleges to attract students and funds as it "softened" its mission statement. These

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[4]Charles M. Stanton, "Religion in American Higher Education: A Disappearing Force," The Review of Higher Education 18 (Fall 1994): 112.

[5]Longfield, "For God, for Country, and for Yale," in Secularization of the Academy, 155-56.

church-related institutions also jeopardized their distinctives by forsaking the student policies of *in loco parentis* in favor of a more libertarian approach to student life.[6] Guthrie's basic conclusion was that the institutions he studied had opted for an accommodationist perspective of institutional mission in which church-relatedness did not define the college or university but was simply "a component of the mission statement" that enabled a college "to maximize its recruiting and fundraising efforts."[7] In other words, church-relatedness became an important characteristic of an institution only when it would benefit that institution.

George Marsden couches this accommodationist philosophy within an historical context. He proposes three interactive forces which pressured the church-related institutions and the emerging research universities in the late nineteenth century. Colleges and universities in American higher education were forced to respond to the demands of a technological society, to the more intensive broad-based ideological conflicts, and to the rising pluralism and related cultural change. Marsden describes this adaptation by church-related institutions in two ways—methodological secularization and ideological secularization. "Methodological secularization takes place when, in order to obtain greater scientific objectivity or to perform a technical task, one decides it is better to suspend religious beliefs." Thus, academicians in the technical disciplines on the Protestant church-related campus adopted the same presupposition as their colleagues on the secular campus "who believed that all of life was best-lived without reference to religious faith." By the 1920s, this mood, coupled with the fact

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[6]David S. Guthrie, "Institutional Distinctives and the Process of Adaptation at Three Presbyterian-Church-Related Colleges" (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1990), 3, 8.

[7]Ibid., 154.

that the scientific method had invaded the social sciences, had settled across most sectarian campuses.[8]

This methodological secularization which elevated science over faith complemented the prevailing campus sentiment of man over God. As Christocentrism died a slow death, the stage was set for what Marsden calls ideological secularization. Marsden laments, ". . . within about only fifty years [1870-1920] they [liberal Protestants and post-Protestants] effected a remarkable revolution that eliminated most traditional views from respectable academia. Both liberal Protestants and secularists used the prestige of evolutionary biology to discredit biblicism and to promote the virtues of a scientifically dominated worldview."[9] The denominationally affiliated colleges could not withstand such ideological assaults since they had the same goals as the secular universities in serving the general public as well as their own constituency. In a more general sense, ideological secularization within a church-related institution is the long process of intentional or unintentional removal of religious faith and symbols from the academic community.

While these primarily Protestant colleges were affected by both ideological and methodological secularization, what has been the reaction of the Bible college? As seen from chapter two, the handful of Bible training institutes in existence at the time of the Scopes trial placed themselves in the middle of the fundamentalist fray as a defense against any ideological secularization. Founded in many ways as a reaction to such drift, the Bible college movement was, and still is, very sensitive to any ideological accommodation. Methodological secularization, however, has made more inroads into the

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[8]George M. Marsden, "The Soul of the American University: An Historical Overview," in The Secularization of the Academy, eds. George M. Marsden and Bradley J. Longfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 13, 16, 21.

[9]Ibid., 22.

Bible college movement. Some Bible colleges, formerly Bible training institutes, slowly found themselves facing the same challenges the Christian liberal arts college had been confronting for years. While some of this can be attributed to the struggle for financial survival, the increasing breadth of curriculum and the deepened respect for the scientific method has placed some Bible colleges in the same situation faced by the church-related institutions of the early twentieth century. An understanding of Marsden's historical analysis and Guthrie's more recent admonitions of maintaining institutional distinctives might prove beneficial to members of the Bible college movement currently struggling with such issues.

In recent years, more and more church historians have analyzed the phenomenon known as the secularization process. As the Bible college movement wades into its second century of existence intent on entering the mainstream of American higher education, no efforts have been spared in the attempt to insulate themselves from any form of secularization. As the subsequent discussion will show, secularization is a topic of continuous interest on many Bible college campuses.

Ideological Secularization

The primary function of the handful of American Bible colleges founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was to train the average lay person to meet the needs of a growing urban population through relief work, Sunday schools, and street evangelism. These early Bible training institutes established in such cities as New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis were so focused on their mission that the philosophical shifts at many church-related colleges went relatively unnoticed. The Bible training school did not respond to this liberalism until the 1920s when it joined the fundamentalist movement in decrying the mainline denomination's acceptance of the higher critical views of Scripture. In 1929, leaders of the Bible college movement—Gray (Moody), Torrey (Bible Institute of Los Angeles), and Pettingill

(Philadelphia)—joined host William Bell Riley as the keynote speakers at the inaugural meeting of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association. This solidified the link between the fundamentalist reaction to modernism and the Bible college movement. Naturally, the separatist nature which characterized the fundamentalists was assimilated by the Bible colleges and was quite prevalent until the Bible college movement tested the waters of mainstream higher education in the 1960s.

Thus, from 1930 forward, the centrality of the Bible became the anchor of the curriculum in an effort to thwart any modernistic influence which might weaken a Bible college community. This high view of scripture coupled with the separatist, and in some circles, antagonistic, attitude of the Bible college movement made it difficult for any ideological secularization to gain a foothold. One of the secularizing characteristics of the church-related colleges as defined by Marsden was the displacement of biblicism as the grid for faith, truth and practice in favor of "the virtues of a scientifically dominated worldview." Secularization in terms of the Bible college is not so much a displacement of the Bible as it is a lessened emphasis on it. As will be seen, there is little evidence that the centrality of scripture as the source of faith and practice is any more diminished today than it was thirty or fifty years ago. However, as discussed in chapter three, the confusion over mission has caused a lessened emphasis on full-time vocational ministry and the increased significance of non-ministry professional training. This has had a marked effect on the place of the Bible within the Bible college of the 1990s. On most Bible college campuses this form of ideological secularization has been unintentional, or driven by decisions which would be much more methodological in nature. History will show that the fortress mentality of the Bible college movement successfully insulated it from any intentional, ideological shift.

While it makes good rhetoric, and scarcely an article on Bible colleges can be written without an allusion to the once faithful Ivy League institutions, the Bible

colleges, for the most part, have been focused on their mission and the centrality of the Scriptures. There seems to be a quiet resolve to not follow the lead of Harvard and Yale. Though Bible colleges developed mechanisms early in their respective existence to counteract possible theological drift, in reality most time and effort were spent raising funds, recruiting students, and training vocational Christian workers to further the Gospel. In response to any feared liberal leaning, some colleges adopted the adage, "the best defense is a good offense." Much like the fundamentalist movement, the Bible colleges marched forward, equipping their constituencies to battle the modernists as best they could. This pro-active mindset in contrast to a defensive anti-secularization strategy can be seen from the founding of the Bible college accrediting association in 1947.

One of the early AABC newsletters described the Bible institute as ". . . God's answer to the drift from a Bible-based, Christ-centered, evangelistic-minded leadership at the turn of the century. These schools were known for three emphases: the English Bible, personal spiritual development, and practical evangelistic zeal."[10] While this statement contrasted the goals of the Bible college to the secularization in many church-related colleges, the same newsletter reflected the zealousness in which the Bible colleges emphasized excellence in achieving their mission. Lincoln Christian College (IL) once put it this way:

> Our ambition is to build the finest and the greatest institution of higher learning that it is possible for us to build. We want the best buildings possible, not the most extravagant, but the best, from the point of view of practicality and efficiency. We want the best faculty available, not from the view of handsomeness or prestige, but the best from the point of view of the combination of faith, balance, and academic standing. We want the best students available, not from the point of view of a background of wealth or social position, but the best from the point of view of Christian faith, humility, desire to learn, and compassion to preach the Gospel. . . .

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[10]Edward D. Simpson, "What is a Bible College," AABC Newsletter 2 (February 1958): 7.

> This is our ambition, because it is our considered conviction that the greatest demands the best. The greatest message ever given to men to proclaim deserves the greatest and best men of any age to proclaim it. This is especially true of us, because we stand in an age in which the light of the Gospel of Christ is dimmed by confusion and error. We must produce the best possible proclaimers of the Gospel and set them forth to their task of calling men to Christ, surrendering all to Him. Thus the clouds of confusion and error will be thrust aside, and the clear, unadulterated Gospel will be beamed brightly to all men and to all nations.[11]

This charge to the constituencies of Lincoln Bible Institute briefly contrasts Lincoln with those once trustworthy institutions of higher education which have generated "clouds of confusion and error." The majority of the rhetoric accentuates the Bible colleges' drive for excellence. Time and resources were to be turned to the task of equipping the future leaders of the kingdom of God rather than rescuing those once faithful segments of higher education which had succumbed to theological liberalism.

The federal government also was considered by some as a threat to the Bible college. If Bible colleges were to receive financial aid from the government, would they be susceptible to regulations which would dilute the primacy of the Bible and in essence change the nature of the Bible college? Following World War II, most Bible colleges received grants for the veterans who had enrolled in their programs. Eventually the concern shifted to other types of student financial aid. In October 1962, a conference of Christian college business administrators was held in Chicago to answer the question, "Should Christian institutions of higher education accept aid from the federal government?" The affirmative viewpoint encouraged participation in federal funding on the basis that "religion is the basis of a sound democracy" and thus the religious institution should be financed equally to the secular school. The negative stance reflected the attitude held by many of the Bible colleges at least until the early 1970s. In reviewing the conference, the AABC newsletter recounted the negative viewpoint as one

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[11]Lincoln Bible Institute, "The Greatest Demands," The Restorer 14 (December 1957): 4.

which feared that the acceptance of governmental assistance would lead to secularization because "subsidy brings standardization and regulation."[12] Needless to say, within the decade most Bible colleges were participating in the federal Title IV grant and loan programs. This decision did not lead to any governmental influence but it did become a sudden source of cash flow for the Bible colleges.

The eventual reliance on the federal grant and loan programs had the potential of placing the Bible colleges in the unenviable position of making policy decisions based on student enrollment and the instant cash flow unleashed via the federal grant and loan programs. This set the stage for possible methodological secularization, but it did not materialize into any governmental mandates which would have forced the Bible colleges to change ideologically. Needless to say, Bible colleges developed formal and informal policies to insulate themselves from any accommodationist pressures which might have softened its Biblical foundations.

Defense Mechanisms

For the Bible college movement to have any societal impact at all in its second century of existence, it must be able to maintain the centrality of the Bible in policy and practice. This will only be possible if future board members, administrators, faculty, and even students reflect the unalterable essentials of the movement, and more importantly, the distinctives of each respective Bible college. As one administrator emphatically explained:

> . . . what I am saying is that we want administrators and faculty members who understand and are committed to that mission wholeheartedly. Not as slaves or regimented [sic], but committed because of choice. And they are here because they want to be here, and they want to seek to accomplish what we are. I don't want to preserve this school, I want to preserve our mission. . . . If we lost our mission we

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[12]American Association of Bible Colleges, "Federal Aid to Christian Schools," AABC Newsletter 7 (February 1963): 7-8.

> ought to die, I think, instead of survive, from my point of view. Our mission is more important than our institution.[13]

If fellow academic deans, presidents, and trustees share this same philosophy, then mechanisms must be in place to insure the ideological framework of each Bible college and to act as an insulation from elements which might lead to doctrinal drift.

Those Bible colleges which are church-related have an additional set of denominational expectations which serve as preventatives. Of the eighteen institutions of the Assemblies of God, eleven are accredited, undergraduate Bible colleges. To be endorsed by the Assemblies of God, a supported Bible college must complete an independent denominational self-study and host an on-site visit of denominational leaders once every five years. This evaluation includes not only the usual review of documents but also the typical faculty, student, and administrative interviews common to any accreditation visit. In contrast to an accreditation visit, the denomination notes the following characteristics which reflect the essence of the college:

> . . . the spiritual aspect of the college, its loyalty to the Assemblies of God, and to our doctrines, and its product in terms of accomplishing the mission of the church and being responsive to the mission of the church. [We look at] the composition of their board with respect to the sponsoring church. We look through a different lens . . . then we bring the report back to our board of Christian higher education with a recommendation from that committee to renew the endorsement or take steps toward disengaging—warning, caution, probation, or non-renewal of endorsement—which would simply mean that they would not be recognized anymore as an A/G college and would not receive any funds and would not be eligible to promote within our official publications.[14]

The Assemblies of God places the most stringent denominational expectations on its colleges of all the groups within AABC with the anticipation of preserving their mission and preventing theological drift.

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[13]Lynn Gardner, interview by author, 3 November 1993, Joplin, tape recording, Ozark Christian College, Joplin, MO.

[14]David R. Bundrick, interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, tape recording, Assemblies of God National Office, Springfield, MO.

For Bible colleges which describe themselves as non-creedal and non-denominational in nature, the task of defending against ideological secularization is dependent upon the individual institution. This places added importance on faculty and administration hiring. At one institution, and this is not unusual, the school by-laws require that faculty must be members of a specific church—in this case a Christian/Church of Christ.[15] At a sister institution, a faculty member reported that at least 50 percent of the faculty were to be graduates of that specific college. He reasoned, "Those who have been raised in the institution . . . matriculated through after four years, have our mission indelibly planted [in them]. Every student seems to understand [the mission] because all the faculty understand."[16] The academic dean explained, "Well our president and myself, we do not hire anybody as a teacher that we are not both in favor of. And we don't have a right to hire even a part-time teacher without trustee approval. . . . Basically, we want them to have the same faith and commitment of everybody else."[17]

At another non-denominational Bible college without a written doctrinal statement, the faculty hiring process was admitted to be the most interesting and most essential to maintaining the distinctives of faith and mission. An administrator remarked, ". . . when we do hire people, they are well-interviewed. They are interviewed by the faculty. We discuss these kinds of [current] issues. Theological, current movements,

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[15]Michael Pabarcus, interview by author, 1 November 1993, Florissant, MO., tape recording, St. Louis Christian College, Florissant, MO.

[16]Mark Moore, interview by author, 3 November 1993, Joplin, tape recording, Ozark Christian College, Joplin, MO.

[17]Gardner, interview.

and things like this, we discuss them. We try to get those who agree with what we have been doing and that's why I think we have maintained the position."[18]

The faculty hiring process is key at institutions with creedal statements as well. At many Bible colleges the faculty are annually asked to sign a statement of agreement with the institutional doctrinal statement which in most cases is also printed in the college catalog. Not only does this provide a plumb line for new hires, but it also challenges continuing faculty members to measure any transformations occurring in their belief systems. When asked what mechanisms were in place to maintain the distinctives of a smaller Bible college one faculty member referred to the doctrinal statement. He declared,

> Every faculty member signs annually the agreement without mental reservation the position of the college. So I would say that probably that statement would [preserve the distinctives]—you know the men will come and go, the trustees and even the administration, even the president—whoever—but whoever comes into these offices comes under the document, and so they are bound. . . .[19]

At similar institutions the doctrinal statement is the starting point for new faculty. Hiring interviews with the respective departmental chair, the department faculty, the academic dean, the personnel office, and of course, the president are all conducted with the view of not only doctrinal agreement but also institutional fit. The ethos of the college and the doctrinal positions are so intertwined that any misunderstanding of the theological standards will result in a misperception of the campus community. The doctrinal and cultural fit are also necessary when appointing board members and they are further accentuated when searching for a college president.

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[18]Michael Chambers, interview by author, 16 February 1994, Kissimmee, FL., tape recording, Florida Christian College, Kissimmee, FL.

[19]Samuel Telloyan, interview by author, 14 October 1992, Owatonna, MN., tape recording, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, Owatonna, MN.

The search process for a president serves as a reminder to all constituencies of the Bible college the importance of the mission of the institution and the "givens" or "non-negotiables" which are its benchmarks. At one institution there was concern that the new president and his secular education would be cause for the college to begin a process of secularization. To counteract the concerns of liberal drift, the Bible college asked a successful and respected alumnus of forty years to write a letter to all supporting constituencies. What follows is an example of how serious a Bible college considers the issue of ideological secularization:

> Dear friends of William Tyndale College,
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> As a member of the graduating class of 1951, I write this letter as an alumnus who is grateful to God for the doctrinal and practical education I received at the "Detroit Bible College" (now Tyndale College). . . .
>
> On March 22, 1991, . . . I spent a number of hours with _____, the new president of Tyndale, discussing the past, present, and future of my alma mater. Our spirits were unitedly warmed as we conversed, and . . . I immediately felt that _____ was God's man for what may, undoubtedly, become the school's greatest days.
>
> We also recognized that this highly educated leader had not allowed liberalism or present-day compromises to influence his thinking, though he graduated from some of the leading bastions of higher education. Thus, after experiencing the spiritual heartbeat of this godly man, I feel strongly compelled to state that the great doctrinal emphasis of past years will only become exceedingly stronger.
>
> That same day I spoke in chapel and experienced a warmth among faculty and students that was spiritually overwhelming.
>
> I, along with . . . plan to back _____ and William Tyndale College with renewed vision, vigor, and vitality. Please stand with us as we support the school that has produced hundreds of stalwart leaders who have been, and are, "valiant for the faith."[20]

This appeal served not only as a call to unity among the constituencies of William Tyndale College but also as a guarantee that Tyndale would stand firm in its founding biblical traditions. The "bill of good health" given the president by this representative

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[20]Jack Van Impe, "Dear Friends of William Tyndale College," (Farmington Hills, MI.: William Tyndale College, 1991): 1.

alumnus assured supporters that Tyndale would not travel the slippery slope of liberalism common to the once church-related colleges of the early twentieth century. This ideological secularization has not affected Tyndale, but Tyndale has recently broadened its mission and joined the ranks of the Christian liberal arts colleges. The intentionality of its shift in mission, as described in chapter three, has most likely aided Tyndale in its efforts to avoid a theological drift or a slow erosion of biblical centrism. Those Bible colleges which have reduced the Bible major as part of the mandated curriculum and have acknowledged their move into the realm of the Christian liberal arts college seem better prepared to face secularizing influences than those Bible colleges that simply drift to a more liberal arts model. Some Bible colleges begin their shift by having made policy decisions which some might view as the first step onto the slippery slope of ideological secularization.

Both Bible college administrators and faculty members have voiced their concern over the slippery slope in the area of hiring. One institution which sits squarely in the Wesleyan tradition expressed worry when considering an adjunct mathematics instructor of Presbyterian persuasion. In reference to possibly hiring contrary to college policy, one academic dean hoped, "Maybe being an adjunct we can get around it [the Presbyterianism] but yet we don't want to do like Nyack, that was basically an Arminian school where they have as many or more Calvinist teachers now as they do on the other scope. You know we don't want to do that. That would destroy our mission as we see it."[21] Similarly, a second Bible college enlisted the full-time services of a Presbyterian mathematics instructor to a campus quite disparate in theology from historic Calvinism.

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[21]Robert England, interview by author, 18 October 1993, Cincinnati, tape recording, God's Bible School and College, Cincinnati, OH.

It is in these areas of specialization that Bible colleges find themselves wrestling with the strict hiring policies. Several of the academic deans voiced concern that in order to service the upper level courses in business, accounting, mathematics, and science, they were faced with the temptation to hire instructors who have little or no understanding of the ethos of the Bible college. Their fears were that the new faculty member will have little or no comprehension of the mission of the Bible college, its doctrinal distinctives, or its philosophy of education. Though adjunct instructors might be cause for some concern, the deans concluded that the recruitment of full-time faculty who have no resonation whatsoever with the mission and purposes of a Bible college could potentially have an adverse effect on the direction of the college.

The board of trustees must also embrace the mission of the college, the fulfillment of which is their ultimate responsibility. One Christian liberal arts college, formerly a Bible college, has been the cause for increased anxiety at the denominational headquarters.[22] The shift to a liberal arts curriculum resulted in a breadth of the student population to the point where only 50 percent of the enrollment represents the sponsoring denomination. In spite of denominational criteria, this dilution of institutional community has also affected the board of trustees with three representatives having no ties to the denomination. This loss of control by the leadership of the denomination has signaled, in some minds, the first stages of ideological secularization. Only time will tell.

The appointment of trustees, presidents, and faculty who understand the Bible college movement—its purpose and mission—are key in the struggle to stay the course. New members of the Bible college community have the potential to intentionally remove the Bible from its central place within the community and its curriculum. While such a displacement of purpose would be viewed as an internal commitment to the

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[22]Bundrick, interview.

secularization process, it would take years for the external constituencies to detect such a shift. On most Bible college campuses there are many defense mechanisms in place to keep this potential for secularization at a minimum. The goal of such internal commitments is to maintain the mission and ethos of the Bible college in spite of other more visible changes. One such modulation, quite public, is the choice of Bible colleges to change their names. Bible colleges which choose this option become immediate objects of assessment by their external constituencies, especially if the new name is more socially acceptable or "secular."

Name Changes

Institutions of higher education carry their specific name for different reasons. Some colleges and universities are named for great historical figures or the founding philanthropists. The unique geographical setting cannot be denied in naming some institutions while others are named for their distinct task and mission. Of institutions which have changed their names over the years, the majority have exchanged a specific mission-oriented name for a more general one. One example would be the teachers colleges. Sam Houston State Teachers College (TX) became Sam Houston State University as programs and curriculum were developed to meet the broader needs of the constituency in east Texas. Likewise, Bible colleges, which have broadened their mission to meet the needs of an expanding constituency, have changed their names.

Several former members of AABC are now Christian liberal arts colleges and their new names reflect such a shift in emphasis. Nyack College (NY) was formerly the Nyack Missionary Training Institute and later the Nyack Missionary College before leaving AABC in 1969. Before entering the world of the Christian liberal arts college, Nyack, founded in 1882, was proudly the oldest Bible college, predating Moody Bible Institute by four years. Messiah College (PA), founded in 1909, was once the Messiah Bible

School and Missionary Training Home. By 1924, it was known as Messiah Bible College with "Bible" dropped from the name in 1951. The Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA) became Biola University, Providence Bible Institute (RI) became Barrington College and eventually merged with Gordon College (MA). Finally, as of 1994, the former Grand Rapids Baptist Bible College which had changed its name to Grand Rapids Baptist College is now Cornerstone College. Many Christian liberal arts colleges, especially current members of the Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities, have their roots in the Bible college movement.

Name changes have not been uncommon to the Bible college movement in America. The history of AABC has been fraught with such changes. Since 1947, with the founding of the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, thirty-three of the current member institutions have changed their names. In the earlier years, many replaced the words "institute" or "training school" with "college" to better reflect the changing degree status of the Bible college. Over the years, a few have changed their names for relocation or merger purposes and others have desired to align themselves closer to their founding denomination or fellowship. In the majority of cases, however, name changes within the Bible college movement have been reflective of the expanding mission of the Bible colleges. A name change would not be such a charged issue save for the fact that most Bible colleges in light of the broadening mission have chosen more generic names in place of those which have "Bible" as the middle name (i.e., Lancaster Bible College). For some, the deletion of "Bible," "Baptist," or some other descriptor of distinctive has been a sign of accommodation or secularization which has positioned the Bible college away from its original moorings.[23]

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[23]Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, Directory, 1994-95 (Fayetteville, AR.: Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, 1994), 137-38.

Bible colleges which have changed their names are continually challenged as to whether a name change signals a liberal drift, especially when "Bible" is deleted from the name. This is a difficult judgment to make. To the leadership of a given Bible college who have made the decision to change the name, the motivation is an honest representation of an expanding mission. For example in 1963, Lincoln Bible Institute changed its name to Lincoln Christian College. The catalog defended the change on the basis that it chose:

> . . . to wear a designation more in keeping with standard academic terminology and a name more representative of the kind of programs the college carries on. . . . These changes in name do not indicate a change in objective, program, or spirit. These remain faithful to the original purpose and policy of the college. No other alteration whatsoever has been made—only in the name.[24]

When a name change occurs there is the genuine intention of the Bible college to not change the mission or purpose. However, it can be shown that most are having to change their name to be honest to their identity. The proliferation of non-ministry majors creates Bible colleges with more breadth of mission than when the Bible college movement organized in 1947.

The frustration or tension for many Bible colleges, however, lies in the fact that they are market-driven. If a college chooses to leave "Bible" in its name, many prospective students will assume a more narrow mission and will overlook that college for another with more curricular offerings. A Bible college without "Bible" or a denominational descriptor in the name is considered by a larger pool of students. As one academic dean explained,

> . . . the thing that I see is, and it happened to me when I went to college, I didn't go to a Bible college 'cause I wasn't planning on being a preacher. Now that was ignorance on my part and I think that ignorance is still there. You get young people in high

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[24]Lincoln Christian College, Catalog, 1963-64 (Lincoln, IL.: Lincoln Christian College, 1963) 8.

> school and you say I'm from Pillsbury Baptist Bible College. They say, well, I'm not going to be a preacher, so I can't go there.[25]

Consequently, some Bible colleges in certain public relations materials have deleted part of their name, if only to get a hearing from a greater range of students.[26] Other Bible colleges have simply changed their names.

One example of this quandary has been Crown College in St. Bonifacius, Minnesota. Founded in 1916, the college resided in St. Paul until 1970 where it was known as the St. Paul Bible College—a regional Bible college of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Twenty-one years later, in 1991, the college leadership changed the name to Crown College for several reasons, including the fact that it was no longer located in St. Paul. Other reasons embraced in Crown College publications included recruitment concerns and the increasing number of curricular programs. With non-ministry majors such as business administration, teacher education, music performance, psychology, physical education, and English, recruitment efforts become less complicated by deleting "Bible" from its name. Every student presently earns a second major in "Christian Studies" which includes the core of courses characteristic of the typical Bible college.[27] Does the name change imply that Crown College has embarked on a theological drift? Not necessarily. It does, however, set the stage for continued challenges within the realm of methodological secularization.

The reverse of this discussion is that a name change does have some effects—internally and externally. When "Bible" is dropped from the name of a Bible college,

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[25]Paul Ague, interview by author, 14 October 1992, Owatonna, MN., tape recording, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, Owatonna, MN.

[26]Ibid. Pillsbury Baptist Bible College uses "Pillsbury College" in some of its promotional materials. Likewise, Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God uses "Southeastern College."

[27]St. Paul Bible College, "St. Paul Bible College to Become Crown College," Bridge, October/November 1991, 2; Waconia (Minn.) Patriot, 17 October 1991.

the campus community undergoes a less than favorable transformation when such comments persist such as, "We don't have to worry about that any more, we are no longer a Bible college."[28] As the change of name flows from a shift of mission, the constituencies must wrestle with the nuances of such a shift. The dilemma at many Bible colleges pits the historical, single-focused Bible training school model against the current quasi-liberal arts model. One veteran faculty member acknowledged,

> . . . we are partially that [a liberal arts college] de facto right now. We are no longer a traditional one-lane Bible college . . . a focused Bible college. That mentality of training these people the Word of God and getting them into hands-on technique for ministry and get them out to save souls, we've moved away from that to some degree. Now we still say . . . everything is ministry, but training a guy to be a psych. major or school teacher is not the same thing that the historical Bible college did.[29]

While the general mission of the Bible college movement has begun to gradually reflect some of the same curricular characteristics of a liberal arts college, it has successfully insulated itself from any ideological secularization. Bible colleges participate in state and federal student financial aid programs and there has been little governmental interference to this point. Adherence to doctrinal statements and intense hiring practices have served as defense mechanisms in the preservation of theological distinctives and campus community. Bible colleges have changed their names to better project their mission, yet they remain steadfastly committed to the centrality of the Bible in faith and practice. Ideological secularization is rare within the Bible college movement, it can be argued, however, that methodological secularization is alive and well within the ranks of the Bible colleges in America.

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[28]Charles Harris, interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, tape recording, Central Bible College, Springfield, MO.

[29]Tom Wilson, interview by author, 15 February 1994, Lakeland, tape recording, Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God, Lakeland, FL.

Methodological Secularization

All of the Bible colleges firmly value the centrality of the Bible as their basis for purpose and mission. However, in an age where constituent and economic demands weigh heavily on each Bible college, it has been easy to slowly move the biblical or full-time ministry emphasis to the periphery of the campus community. This is called methodological secularization. Methodological secularization, as earlier explained by Marsden, "takes place when, in order to obtain greater scientific objectivity or to perform a technical task, one decides it is better to suspend religious beliefs."[30] While the Bible college has been shown to be proactive in negating any possible ideological secularization, it has not been as operative in hedging itself against methodological secularization This susceptibility does not lie in the fact that a Bible college suspends its religious beliefs, but in the fact that those biblical distinctives are moved from the center to the periphery in an effort to bring breadth to the curriculum.

The process of ideological secularization eventually dissolves any trace of formalized biblicism, as evidenced by Harvard, Yale, and others, while methodological secularization retains biblical distinctives but not as a core value. As the separatist, reactionary persona of the Bible college movement has protected itself from any liberal leanings in joining the mainstream of American higher education, the crisis in mission and the challenge to credibility as acknowledged in previous chapters have set the stage for the subtleness of methodological secularization.

The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges and Secularization

The discussion of secularization held within the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) over the years has focused on the ideological concerns—theological

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[30]Marsden, "The Soul of the American University," in The Secularization of the Academy, 16.

liberalism. Since the Fundamentalist controversy of the 1920s, the preservation of the Bible as the cornerstone of the Bible college movement has been almost instinctive. So much so that AABC as an organization did not begin to address any secularization concerns until the late 1980s. The impetus behind this discussion was not the fact that established Bible colleges were suddenly apostate but rather that many Bible colleges were reevaluating the definition of Christian ministry. The recent objective of the AABC membership has been to reframe the idea of full-time vocational Christian ministry as the primary thrust of a Bible college into a broader context. Within the last decade, the executive director challenged the membership, "In my judgment, our philosophy of higher education must allow Association members maximum flexibility to meet the needs of their specific constituencies. They must have the ability to serve the Church at the point of need. For some the need is solely for full-time vocational workers."[31] By implication, the need has arisen to educate students to fill professional positions outside the historical categories of full-time Christian service.

This is the watershed discussion within the Bible college movement which directly relates to methodological secularization. AABC has encouraged a new double-tiered or dual track membership. Continuing the discussion by the executive director from several years ago:

> Hence, our philosophy must be stated in more inclusive terms. This will allow colleges wishing to retain a strong emphasis upon professional ministry to continue to do so. But it would also enable others, who are working to meet the needs of a quite different segment of God's family, sufficient flexibility to offer comprehensive programs to address the concerns of those they serve and yet remain within the framework of the Association. In my opinion, our philosophy should stress that which is common to both types of colleges, and should not insist that the sole reason for a Bible college's existence is the preparation of full-time workers for church-related vocations.[32]

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[31]Randall Bell, "A Word from the Executive Director," AABC Newsletter 32 (September 1988): 2, 15.

[32]Ibid., 15.

The motivation by AABC in encouraging the support of those Bible colleges which have expanded their programs has been to protect them from secularization. This reasoning is based upon the assumption that a stricter definition of Bible college would deny membership to those Bible colleges being pressured by constituent and societal pressures to expand their programs. The argument further implies that if AABC would have remained firm in its insistence that preparation for Christian ministry was the primary characteristic of a Bible college, then AABC's sphere of influence would decrease and growing Bible colleges, for whatever reason, would be forced to leave AABC which in turn would leave them easy prey to liberal influences. By allowing member institutions to determine the extent of full-time ministry preparation within their programs, AABC would be able to maintain its membership and would even serve as a buffer against ideological secularization. In the words of the executive director, "I would like AABC to be a strong force for preserving biblically-based higher education in a day when external, secularizing pressures are even stronger."[33]

It would be helpful if AABC would explain its understanding of secularization. The implication has been simply that theological liberalism, or in the context of this discussion, ideological secularization, is the primary evil confronting a Bible college. In 1989, the associate director of AABC analyzed the state of the Bible college and in so doing reflected on both the increased duality of purpose within the membership and the potential for secularization. On a somewhat defensive note he summarized:

> There exists some confused thinking with reference to secularization. A college is not secularizing simply because it seeks to influence more students by offering majors in addition to Biblical Studies, Church Ministries, Education, Missions, and Music. If that were true, then 57 of the 90 accredited colleges of the Association have stepped over the line. These colleges offer majors, concentrations, or minors in 34 other disciplines, including Art, Accounting, Biology, Broadcasting, Business, Communications, English, French, Humanities, History, Mathematics, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Social Science, Social Work, Spanish, and Urban Studies.

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[33]Ibid.

His conclusion is that "Theological liberalism . . . does not result from a student obtaining a double major in Biblical Studies and English, but from the adoption of a philosophy that permits a lesser view of Scripture."[34]

The fear of the Bible college leadership is that by not broadening the definition of Bible colleges, Bible colleges which choose to add liberal arts or professional majors will have to leave the Association. The implication of AABC is that this exit will be the first step onto the slippery slope of theological liberalism. Wilson, the associate director, also states:

> As we force them away from the Association's influence . . . we are contributing to their potential secularization rather than [AABC] being used of God as a means of restraint. . . . Rather if we are truly concerned about secularization of Christian colleges and the impact that this has on the lives of so many students, it would seem that we would seek to state our educational philosophy in terms that are sufficiently broad to accommodate colleges that wish to offer an expanded curriculum and yet hold to those components that we deem essential to a biblical higher education.[35]

The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges sees its role as stemming the tide of Christian college secularization. An argument could be made, however, that AABC's accommodational stance is an encouragement to secularization—a methodological secularization. A redefinition of full-time Christian service coupled with curriculum expansion places the Bible college in a compromising position. The pillar of the movement—the centrality of the Bible—is placed on shifting sand.

The Redefinition of Full-time Christian Service

As noted from previous discussions, the vast majority of Bible colleges were founded with one purpose in mind—to train men and women for full-time vocational Christian work. The line between the Christian liberal arts college and the Bible

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[34]William Wilson, "The State of the Bible College," AABC Newsletter 33 (January 1989): 4.

[35]Ibid.

institute/college was very clear. Some within the Bible college movement have attempted to wed the two, but have faced the challenge of articulating a clear mission and purpose. This has not been as difficult for those Bible colleges which have promoted a strong general education core coupled with an emphasis on ministry.

One such institution is Pillsbury Baptist Bible College (MN), which, when founded in 1957, was modeled after the prestigious Christian liberal arts college—Wheaton College (IL). Though not a member of AABC, Pillsbury requires students to take the minimum thirty hours of Bible. Alan Potter, the president, considers Pillsbury a progressive Bible college. He explained:

> Our desire is to prepare young men and women for full-time vocational Christian ministry. But we say that it is progressive because we traditionally have a little bit more in the educational environment than in the traditional Bible colleges. For instance, for a Bible college to have a full educational department offering secondary education, elementary education, special education—for us to have a business department in the school, to offer a minor in computers—they are programs what don't normally fit into the Bible college structure, but we had felt that they were appropriate because we feel that all knowledge is essential for the Christian leader.

Potter concluded:

> So we have a primary mission, that is vocational ministry and we have a secondary mission and that is that the graduate would be one who is articulate concerning Christ wherever they are at.[36]

It has been easy for Pillsbury to operate with these dual purposes since they were part of the founding mission. But it is more difficult at the Bible college which was formerly a training school or institute to convince the primary constituencies that a broader definition is necessary on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

At a growing Bible college, known at one time as a Bible institute, an administrator admitted:

> Part of our healthy tension here at this school is getting all the faculty to agree that those [two tracks of curriculum] are legitimate definitions of our mission. On one side you have those who say, 'Yes, it fits our mission because we want these people

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[36]Alan Potter, interview by author, 15 October 1992, Owatonna, MN., tape recording, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, Owatonna, MN.

> ultimately to be leaders in the church. They are just choosing to utilize different vocations to realize their income, but basically they are our church leaders.' We want them to be the elders, the teachers, the youth group leaders, and so forth, or work in a parachurch organization, as we use that term. On the other side of the coin are those who say, 'No, the heart of what we are about as a Bible college is training professional church leaders—paid church leaders.'[37]

Lincoln along with fifty or sixty other Bible colleges must wrestle through these same issues. In an attempt to service the two competing philosophies, Lincoln has chosen to use two terms which resonate with the historical roots of the Bible college movement—vocational and "Biblecational". Rather simplistic, the "Biblecational" confirms to worried constituencies that while Lincoln's primary purpose is vocational Christian ministry, any non-ministry program will maintain the Bible as the cornerstone of that major.

Another positive aspect of this tension is that the non-vocational majors are framed as strategic players in spreading the Gospel to a lost world. Graduates with "passport" or "tentmaking" skills similar to the Peace Corps will find easier entrance into third world countries wary of the American missionary. Tanner summarized Lincoln's position, "If in the fifties a strategy was getting ministers into local congregations in Illinois, then that's the best thing you could do. If in the nineties it's training people with passport skills to be able to get into closed countries like China, then that's the best you can do."[38]

The direction of Lincoln Christian College has been the path chosen by the majority of the Bible colleges in AABC. The definition of full-time Christian ministry has been broadened to include possible majors which could be used to advance the kingdom of Christ in some way, shape, or form—a modified Christian liberal arts college. The

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[37]Thomas Tanner, interview by author, 22 September 1993, Lincoln, IL., tape recording, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, IL.

[38]Ibid.

minority of Bible colleges prefer a more narrow curricular approach due a more focused mission or due to the fact that the denomination or fellowship already sponsors a Christian liberal arts college. The Assemblies of God is one denomination which supports both Bible colleges and liberal arts colleges.

In 1955, the Assemblies of God had the foresight to establish a Christian liberal arts college to support the regional Bible institutes, many of which were already twenty-five years old. Forty years later, the Assemblies claim two liberal arts colleges and eleven accredited Bible colleges with all but two of these poised and ready to move in the direction of the liberal arts college. The executive director of the denominational board of higher education acknowledged as much:

> This pressure started hitting twenty years ago. So we first started out with education majors, elementary and then later the secondary level which then required regional accreditation. Then came the marketing degree, the business degree, followed by the psychology major. And now in the school I am a graduate of, Southeastern College—Southeastern Bible Institute back in 1935—less than half the majors now are ministerial or church-related ministry majors.[39]

A faculty member of thirty-five years at Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God made the following observation as it relates to training for full-time Christian ministry. He commented:

> I'm trying to be fair as I can. There is a great deal said, a great deal of lip service given by board members, administrators, possibly faculty at times in chapel that well, school teachers are in the ministry, psychology people are in the ministry, etc. That is true. We wouldn't argue that. The bootmaker that does it to the glory of God has a sense of ministry. So quite a bit of lip service is given to that and probably in sincerity. But I would say that there is some, I think, in the student body diminished sense of focus to what we had thirty-five years ago. It may not be that significant . . . But I still sense a very significant level of dedication and commitment on the part of these young people to Christian service. I don't think it is limited to those who are just training for "the ministry." I think it is true among a lot of the teachers and probably a lot of psychology students. So possibly, in a broad spread, there has been some diminishing of focus but there is still a high level of commitment on the part of most of these young people.[40]

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[39]Bundrick, interview.

[40]Wilson, interview.

These thoughts could be repeated on many Bible college campuses which have wrestled with the expansion of the curriculum to accommodate the quasi-ministry majors.

At another Bible college the evaluation was similar. A faculty member of twenty years whose father was one of the founders also observed a different ethos on a campus with more diverse majors. In retrospect he remarked:

> I think that with our school, at that time our school was kind of driven numerically. More and more of the students from the school were choosing the teaching profession, as far as percentage-wise it was still a minority, but it was a growing minority in our school, that were choosing the teaching profession. Somehow those kids did not share the same heart as those who are called to be missionaries or called into the pastorate. There is a certain emotion or feeling or commitment that those who are going into teaching at the time—it was sort of half maybe Christian school, maybe public school, but did not have the same intensity of commitment. It changed the atmosphere on campus.[41]

The implication of these veterans of the Bible college movement is that a breadth of curricular majors affects the dynamics of the campus community. The commitment and focus required to prepare for full-time Christian ministry is different than the sacrifice in obtaining a job in the marketplace. The campus ethos begins to be pulled in opposite directions.

This shift in direction or redefinition of ministry is confirmed when the enrollments of AABC institutions are analyzed by major. According to a 1993 profile, 28 percent of the total AABC enrollment was registered in non-ministry majors. When the Pastoral Studies majors were removed from the statistics, Teacher Education, General Studies, and Business majors had registrations equivalent to those students enrolled in Christian Education, Missions, and General Bible. Even more significant was that the 28 percent in the non-ministry majors were present on only half of the Bible college campuses. It would stand to reason, then, that the concentration of these majors

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[41]William Dowell Jr., interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, tape recording, Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO.

at those colleges would be quite high. This certainly would make it difficult to maintain a focus on and commitment to full-time Christian ministry at many Bible colleges.[42]

As mentioned previously, this dual-track curricular emphasis at many Bible colleges has been encouraged by AABC with the hope that healthy enrollments and the resultant fiscal health would keep these colleges from leaving the association. Remaining in AABC would be a preventative measure against any possible liberalizing tendencies. For all practical purposes, however, AABC has facilitated a methodological secularization where the Bible as the center of the curriculum with a view to full-time ministry has been marginalized. At the 1994 AABC national conference, the membership adopted policy changes allowing non-ministry majors to take fewer than the thirty hours of Bible courses—the previous AABC mandate. These changes allowed for nine of the thirty hours to be in "interdisciplinary Bible-related courses" which would apply the Bible's teaching to the student's non-ministry major. For clarification purposes, the membership listed examples of such interdisciplinary courses as "Business Principles and Practices, Ethics, Teaching the Bible, Educational Philosophy, Communications Theory, The Bible as Literature, Principles of Leadership, Human Resource Management, and Economic Theory."[43] Clearly, some of these courses require an explanation of their relationship not only to the Bible but to ministry as well. Based upon the discussion prior to the vote in which this writer was a participant, some within the Bible college movement viewed these suggested courses as symbolic of a methodological secularization with "pure" Bible and ministry courses being inched

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[42]American Association of Bible Colleges, "A Profile of AABC Institutions Based on a 1993 Survey" (Fayetteville, AR.: American Association of Bible Colleges, 1994), 6, photocopied.

[43]American Association of Bible Colleges, "Proposed Criteria Changes," (Fayetteville, AR.: American Association of Bible Colleges, 1994) 2, photocopied. These criteria changes were voted upon at the 47th Annual AABC Conference, February 17-19, 1994, Orlando, FL.

slowly away from the center of the curriculum and the cornerstone of the Bible college mission.

On the doorstep of the twenty-first century, this diversity of curriculum and breadth of programs is a fact of life within the Bible college movement. Those Bible colleges with generic mission statements such as "training kingdom servants" do not have to justify such curricular shifts. However, in order to remain faithful and true to their respective mission statements, other Bible colleges have been forced to defend these decisions using the ministry motif. In the broader sense of the word, a Christian employed full-time in a business profession is engaged in ministry and much more so if he or she uses those skills in third world cultures with some intention of spreading the Gospel. While this more sweeping definition of ministry does not negate the historical nuance of ministry in the vein of the Bible training schools, it is the benchmark by which many Bible colleges operate in 1995. This redefinition of ministry establishes a two track curricular model which sets the stage for methodological secularization.

The Bible colleges have chosen this path for themselves. In response to market pressures, the expansionist tendencies have required AABC to facilitate such changes. This redefinition of Christian ministry has placed some Bible colleges on the brink of becoming Christian liberal arts colleges—a tenuous position at best given the resultant recruitment pressures. It also produces a more dynamic campus ethos. Bible and ministry are no longer the primary focus on campus. True, doctrinal distinctives have not been displaced, but the former centrality of purpose has been shifted to the edge of the campus community in order to accommodate a broader mission. This is methodological secularization within the Bible college movement in America.

The Bible College and Secularization

Historians of higher education, especially private church-related education, have in the last decade sought to determine the causes of institutional drift or secularization.

Marsden has dealt with this topic on a broader plane with Longfield and others in *Secularization of the Academy* (1992) and on a specific basis in *Reforming Fundamentalism* (1987)—an analysis of the growth and diversity of Fuller Seminary. Of late, Burtchaell, a professor of theology at Notre Dame, has sought to analyze the shift of mission and loss of focus of the Christian college. From a more sweeping framework than the Bible college, Burtchaell investigates the changing face of Vanderbilt, a once proudly Methodist institution, with the intent of comparing and contrasting Vanderbilt's adaptive slide on the slippery slope to the American colleges within the Catholic tradition. Guthrie and Stoltzfus have cataloged the institutional drift of other denominational colleges and universities—Presbyterian (PCUSA), Roman Catholic, and Wesleyan.[44]

The question at hand, however, is the response of the American Bible college to this undertow of secularization. Once considered immune to this process, the Bible college finds itself in a sea of change. The change is driven from within rather than from without and the secularization is from a methodological disposition rather than an ideological framework. Methodological secularization drives ideological secularization. In the case of the Bible college, the distress of survival has placed the historically understood ministry emphasis along with the centrality of the Bible on the outskirts of the campus community. This adaptation simply sets the scene for future drift of a more ideological nature—a slow acceptance of a scientific worldview over a biblical worldview. This is hard to imagine within the Bible college movement, but as Burtchaell states, "Secularization, like death, is one of those human events best understood in

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[44]Burtchaell, "The Decline and Fall of the Christian College," First Things 12 (April 1991): 16-29; Burtchaell, "The Decline and Fall of the Christian College (II)," First Things 13 (May 1991): 30-38; David Guthrie, "Institutional Distinctiveness," 1990; Victor Stoltzfus, Church-Affiliated Higher Education: Exploratory Case Studies of Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and Wesleyan Colleges, (Goshen, IN.: Pinchpenny Press, 1992).

retrospect." Neither does this prediction of doom negate the sincere desires of the leaders within the progressive arm of the Bible college movement to thwart such possibilities. Burtchaell's reflection on the secularization process should strike a chord with the well-intentioned in the Bible college movement, ". . . at almost every step in the course of this journey [secularization] there have been concrete and valuable purposes pursued and improvements attained. It is clear that those who were the chief engineers of secularization did not foresee or intend or wish the alienation of their institutions from their mother churches. But the secularization came."[45]

The chief engineers in the Bible college movement have built strong defense mechanisms against any form of ideological secularization. Presidents, administrators, and faculty are thoroughly screened as to doctrinal concerns as well as conservative lifestyle practices which prohibit the use of alcohol and tobacco products. At many institutions, faculty and administrators sign statements acknowledging agreement with and faithfulness to the doctrinal tenets of the college or sponsoring denomination. As many of the Bible colleges changed their names in the last ten to twenty years, opportunity was provided to reinforce with supporting constituencies the respective institution's strong commitment to the Bible. However with the loss of "Bible" or "Baptist" or some other denominational descriptor from the name, eyebrows were raised as to the consistency of the rhetoric with the reality of the changing campus culture.

As the Bible college movement has entered the mainstream of American higher education, it has been forced to make some additional choices of survival which place member institutions tenuously close to the slippery slope. The supporting constituencies, driven by societal pressures, have forced Bible colleges to reevaluate their definition of ministry. The utilitarianism, which is alive and well in the

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[45]Burtchaell, First Things 13 (April 1991): 17-18.

evangelical church, coupled with the natural competition for students, has caused a breadth of curriculum and culture once uncommon to the Bible college. Jobs are more important to parents and prospective students than opportunities to use that training in a ministry. Like falling dominoes, more curricular majors require more faculty and, in some cases, a specialized faculty to service those programs. To be truly qualified upon graduation, curricular expectations in Bible and ministry are sacrificed. Faculty and student cultures slowly change so that the best defense mechanisms cannot prevent shift or drift. The growing curriculums with new revenue producing programs require new buildings, new faculty, and new money. As the pressure for survival increases, boards hire professional administrators rather than ministry-minded clergy to balance the budget rather than to steer the ship on the intended course. A breadth of mission replaces a distinctiveness of mission. This cycle continues as more specialized programs are introduced requiring more faculty and more money. Soon the methodological shift becomes ideological drift and, according to Burtchaell, the best intentioned will not be able to redirect a ship caught in such a current of change.[46]

The changes which have led to this cyclical pattern have been unknowingly supported by the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. With its well-intentioned and sincere warnings against theological liberalism, AABC challenged member Bible colleges not to forsake AABC membership for fear that if they did leave they were assuring themselves of theological destruction. This fear of ideological secularization was the driving force behind AABC's criteria change allowing member institutions to lessen the number of required Bible courses. To be fair to AABC, however, these changes were after the fact and many Bible colleges had already made the decision to broaden their mission, reshape their curriculum, and compromise any sense of distinction while placing themselves very close to, if not in, the realm of a liberal arts college. This

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[46]Ibid., 18.

methodological secularization or drift continues as the expansionism of the Bible college has become a requirement for survival.

As the American Bible college looks to the new century it cannot afford to reflect on the moral demise of the proud Ivy League and the like; rather, the Bible college must be committed to its primary distinctives—the Scripture and ministry. Anything less will place the Bible college on a path which will present many challenges for the next twenty-five years.

CHAPTER 6

THE CHARTER FOR THE FUTURE

In May 1995, the administration of the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) announced budgetary cuts in its undergraduate staff and programs. Though its graduate programs were healthy, IIT's undergraduate programs were "struggling with a host of financial and educational challenges." Eighty faculty positions and twenty-seven of its eighty-nine undergraduate degrees were to be axed as the private institution "restructured" to better service the needs of the majority of its students. Only 5 percent of the 2550 undergraduates had been enrolled in the twenty-seven majors cut from the curriculum. IIT also planned to position future undergraduate programs as steppingstones to its graduate school.[1] This financial crisis at Illinois Institute of Technology triggered steps to not only increase revenues but cut expenses as well.

In the same month, a number of Bible colleges and Christian liberal arts colleges were faced with a novel but serious financial crisis. Several of these institutions had invested heavily in the Foundation of New Era Philanthropy—a too-good-to-be-true investment option which promised to double the principal of any donation with the graciousness of anonymous benefactors. After three years of fulfilling its promises, New Era filed for bankruptcy protection which left many educational and other non-profit organizations scrambling for funds. Four Bible colleges were listed among the creditors of New Era—two to the tune of nearly $25 million dollars. While it is

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[1]Nancy Ryan, "IIT Hopes Less Will Be More as It Cuts Undergraduate Programs and Staff," Chicago Tribune, 25 May 1995, sec. 2, p. 2.

unknown which institutions might have invested operational funds, most of the involved Bible colleges and Christian liberal arts colleges admitted to investing capital campaign dollars in hopes of "growing" additional capital funds. Lancaster Bible College (PA), an institution of seven hundred students, has operated on a no-debt, $6 million dollar budget with a minimal endowment of $1.5 million. "Bankruptcy documents filed by New Era say it owes Lancaster $16.9 million—making the college one of the biggest losers."[2] Instead of breaking ground for a new chapel, library, and residence hall, Lancaster has been forced to put such plans on hold for one to three years. By enhancing revenue at an unbelievable rate, the Foundation of New Era Philanthropy had provided relief for financially stressed educational institutions seeking to expand programs.

The episode with New Era and the retrenchment at the Illinois Institute of Technology have served notice to the many small private educational institutions on the threshold of the next century that resource management will be one of the keys to survival. For colleges and universities with broad constituencies and a general educational mission, effective resource management will greatly enhance institutional health, especially in the days of such a competitive student market. However, in the realm of the American Bible colleges, dynamics are such that more than budgetary decisions will determine the fate of individual colleges as well as the health of the movement itself. The basic choices of either enhancing revenue or cutting expenses mask the underlying decisions which in many cases exacerbate the financial challenges. Such issues as distinctives, mission, leadership, curriculum, and societal pressures directly and indirectly impact the financial health of any educational entity, especially the Bible college. As the American Bible college charts its future into the next century, the survival of the movement as historically understood rests on the leadership who

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[2]Julie L. Nicklin, "At Lancaster Bible College, a 'New Era' Victim, Officers Have Gone from Ground Breaking to Head Shaking," Chronicle of Higher Education, 2 June 1995, A21.

must face these challenges squarely and honestly. There are many philosophical and practical questions to be addressed before the American Bible college can confidently enter the new millennium.

The Future of the American Bible College: An Analysis

It was not until the early 1980s that the Bible college movement started to question its future. The rush of students was over as enrollment in AABC institutions was down 15 percent from the 1970s. The closing of two established Bible colleges—Berkshire Christian College (MA) and Dallas Bible College (TX)—in 1986 sounded the alarm to the remaining ninety or so Bible colleges accredited by AABC. For one hundred years the future of the Bible college movement was never in question. Prior to the 1980s, the literature of AABC made little note of the changes within American society and the resultant impact on the movement. There was the perpetual assumption that the Bible college would always be healthy by faithfully servicing the market niche of those men and women seeking to train for full-time vocational Christian service. An analysis of both the documents and interviews will provide implications as to the future of the Bible college movement.

Documentary Analysis

In 1957, as the first executive director of AABC, Safara Witmer, charted the future, internal concerns were of little import to Bible colleges. The goal of the movement was "to improve still further the quality of education designed to prepare young people for Christian service." Another desire of the Bible colleges was the respect and recognition from the broader educational community. As the movement faithfully and methodically produced preachers and missionaries aided by the influx of veterans called to vocational ministry, the Bible college faced a new challenge. The student revolution of the sixties, prevalent on many secular campuses, drastically

reshaped the established social moorings. Witmer challenged the Bible colleges to "maintain standards of decency, purity, and refinement for a generation of youth tainted by vulgarity and sensuality."[3] With the challenge to excellence, the desire for respect, and the vaccine against societal declension, the American Bible college was ready for the boon to American higher education of the sixties.

Several years later, in his historical survey of the Bible college movement, Witmer challenged the ability of Bible colleges to maintain their distinctives. In 1962, the key pressure faced by the Bible college was the projected doubling of the college-age population. The challenge in light of this pressure was to not expand its mission and become a liberal arts college—thus losing its distinctives. Witmer presented the temptation clearly:

> There will be many practical inducements to broaden the curricula of Bible colleges and even to change their essential function. A liberal arts major and curricula preparing for lucrative professions are more popular than theological programs. The practical advantages are many: increased operational income, higher prestige of the liberal arts, eligibility to foundation grants, wider academic recognition as well as being able to meet the requirements of graduate schools and satisfy the needs of the community.[4]

Harold Cook, the chair of the World Missions Department at Moody Bible Institute in 1961, voiced similar concerns in a faculty meeting:

> It seems to me that here is where the confusion in the Bible college movement has come in. Beginning with the idea of training for Christian service, they later decided to undergird this specific preparation with a foundation in the liberal arts. These liberal arts subjects were not necessarily related to the primary objectives, but had to be introduced if they were to offer an acceptable degree. The inevitable tendency has been to gravitate toward the Christian liberal arts college field. The present Westmont College did it in two steps over a period of just three years. Others have moved more slowly, but the Bible Institute of Los Angeles is now Biola College, and Providence Bible Institute has become Barrington College. They are not yet fully in the liberal arts field, but I think it can be shown that there has been a decline in the

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[3]Safara Witmer, The AABC Looks Forward: A Manifesto (Ft. Wayne, IN.: Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges, 1957), 3, 6.

[4]Safara Witmer, The Bible College Story: Education With Dimension (Manhasset, NY.: Channel Press, 1962), 182.

> proportion of their students who are aiming toward what we classify as specifically Christian ministries.[5]

The concern of Cook was that the liberal arts or general education core was not properly integrated into the context of the Bible college. From the 1930s forward, general education courses at some Bible colleges were purposefully introduced to move them from a Bible institute model to that of a Christian liberal arts college. Cook mentioned some of these. More recently, Tyndale College and Fort Wayne Bible College have been prime examples of this change. While some within the Bible college movement view these changes as a form of secularization, others view this simply as survival. The tension continues within the Bible college movement today as many wrestle to maintain their historical distinctives.

The next discussion of the future of the American Bible college did not occur in AABC literature until 1985. As a fallout to the decline in student population, two accredited Bible colleges had closed and three others were discussing merger. It would not be surprising, then, to see an analysis of the environmental assumptions which would assist Bible colleges to strategically plan for the lean years at the end of the twentieth century. Howard Whaley, academic dean of Moody Bible Institute, interacted with the social, economic, educational, and religious assumptions facing the Bible colleges in the late 1980s. Of most import to this study was his recognition that "private institutions of higher learning which will have a diminished role or cease to exist will be those which do not maintain a distinct, well-defined mission" and that "regional, in addition to professional accreditation, will increasingly be essential for generating student enrollment, funding, and acceptance of credit." Whaley also warned the Bible colleges that duplicating programs because of "apparent interest" and "potential market" could deflect "institutions from their mission as defined in their

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[5]Harold Cook, "Remarks Addressed to Faculty, 1961" TMs [photocopy], p. 3, Office of the Academic Dean, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.

charters." Of the thirty-six environmental assumptions declared by Whaley in 1985, many have proven timeless in significance and require attention by the individual Bible colleges—especially if survival is at issue.[6]

Several years later in 1991, on the heels of another Bible college closure, the cover story of Christianity Today was entitled "Will Bible Colleges Survive the '90s?" Balmer from Columbia University (NY) and Kallgren from Columbia Bible College (SC) gave their perspectives of the movement—one as an observer, the other as a participant. Balmer focused his article on Multnomah Bible College (OR). The leadership of Multnomah admitted to searching for a market niche and quite possibly "managing decline at the undergraduate level." Multnomah was not comfortable with the market and educational realities which declared their three-year diploma program obsolete for the twenty-first century. Multnomah responded with a more progressive educational program which attempted to successfully integrate Bible, ministry, and general education. With the addition of general education and the fear of a dissolution of institutional mission, the president remarked, "It will be a real challenge for the current and subsequent leadership of Multnomah to resist moving from the heart to the head in what we do. I resist moving toward an environment where the academic reigns."[7]

In "The Invisible Colleges," Kallgren affirmed the choices of Multnomah. As the assistant to the president of a Bible college, he surveyed forty-two Bible colleges in which the presidents declared their ambivalence to a breadth of mission. At least one-half, however, admitted financial stress and rued the day when a Bible college would

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[6]Howard Whaley, "One Image of the Future," AABC Newsletter 29 (April 1985): 10, 11.

[7]Randall Balmer, "We Do Bible Better," Christianity Today, 16 September 1991, 25-26.

become a Christian liberal arts college. Unfortunately, the "decreased enrollments" and "increased competition from local churches and other providers of biblical/theological instruction" were factors pushing Bible colleges into making survival decisions for which they were not prepared. Kallgren emphasized the importance of a Bible college in finding a market niche, especially with a seminary degree becoming the credential of choice for many in full-time Christian ministry.[8]

In spite of this less than optimistic note of Kallgren, the president of a Bible college offered hope for the future. In 1993, Alford acknowledged what fellow presidents already knew—a Bible college is doomed when it chooses to leave its mission. In an effort to communicate hope, Alford encouraged each institution to develop a unique mission. He stated, "We are not trying to be different just for difference sake, nor are we trying to duplicate everything else offered in higher education. Each of our institutions has its own distinct mission and purpose. We know what we are all about. We know what we want to accomplish."[9] Upon analysis, this philosophy leads to the abandonment of the community of Bible colleges and encourages the philosophy of "Every institution for itself."

This drive for market niche or institutional uniqueness is also consistent with the analysis of a 1991 Chicago Tribune article which concluded that those Bible colleges which were not changing were closing. The same article also implied that changing to a Christian liberal arts model would be the wave of the future for the Bible college. The president of Tyndale College, formerly Detroit Bible College, was quoted as saying, "Some people have the almost irrational mentality that if you add these other goals or

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[8]Robert C. Kallgren, "The Invisible Colleges," Christianity Today, 16 September 1991, 28.

[9]Paul Alford, "Hope for Christian Education," AABC Newsletter 37 (April 1993): 6.

strengths [Christian liberal arts] that somehow you are detracting from Bible theology. It doesn't make a lot of sense. We can add majors and course offerings without detracting in any way from what we're doing as a college."[10]

When the early leadership of AABC began writing about future aspects of the movement, the primary discussion focused on the Christian liberal arts issue. The genuine anxiety was that soon there would be no undergraduate institutions left to train men and women who upon graduation would step into full-time Christian service positions as pastors, missionaries, church musicians, and Christian educators. More recently the Christian liberal arts debate has shifted to the specifics involved. As noted by recent articles within the movement, the primary topics under discussion are mission, accreditation, general education, and secularization. Perhaps these discussions have led some Bible colleges to become Christian liberal arts colleges—partaking of the initial benefits of increased enrollment and enhanced revenue. However, many former Bible colleges will most likely find themselves wrestling with the same questions several years hence. The analysis of market niche, institutional mission, breadth of curriculum, and secularization will be constant. As the Bible college moves into the mainstream of American higher education, maintaining any type of institutional distinctives will prove more difficult.

Interview Analysis

The campus interviews conducted for this study reinforce the sentiment reflected in some of the more recent documents describing the future of the Bible college movement. Societal shifts, loss of distinctives, and the pressures of the smaller student pool are just some of the concerns underlying the fear that the days of the Bible college

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[10]Lisa Perlman, "Bible Schools Face Ebb Tide," Chicago Tribune, 26 July 1991, sec. 2, p. 9.

are numbered. The survival of the Bible college in America will depend heavily on the movement's interaction with such key topics as societal change, mission, regional accreditation, general education, and secularization. The solutions could lead some Bible colleges to join the ranks of the Christian liberal arts colleges which will greatly increase the student pool but will introduce another set of problems altogether.

One area of dismay noted mainly by smaller Bible colleges which depend heavily on their alumni base in student recruitment has been some of the societal shifts over the last twenty years. The values of the founding, supporting constituencies have been overshadowed by shifting societal values. As some administrators and faculty members reflected on the past, they were discouraged by their own generation. From their standpoint there was a time in America when the challenge of service and ministry were held in high esteem, especially in the Christian home and community. However, it seems that as the offspring of the Baby Boomer generation reached college age, such a challenge was lacking. The materialism of the "me" generation is now bearing fruit even among the Bible colleges. One faculty member described a situation where a young lady strongly desired to enroll at his institution. Because it was a Bible college, which according to the parents "just trains preachers and missionaries," the daughter was required to attend a state university where she could "learn to make a living." Embarrassingly, the father was himself in the ministry.[11]

The increased societal view towards utilitarianism discourages a service spirit, especially if it has any religious overtones. One academic dean observed:

> A lot of ministers, people I went to school with thirty-three years ago, you follow up and hardly any of them have children going into the ministry or even coming to the Bible college. And what many of us surmise is happening is a number of our alumni

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[11]Lloyd Knowles, interview by author, 4 October 1993, Lansing, tape recording, Great Lakes Christian College, Lansing, MI.

> really aren't wanting their children to make the sacrifice. . . . They want them to have a good job and what have you.[12]

He summarized that with sacrifice no longer a value even in the Christian community, it will be even more difficult for many of the smaller Bible colleges to recruit from their alumni.

Another societal trend affecting the Bible colleges is the graying of America. A plus side is that developmentally the colleges are blessed with bequests, wills, and other endowments. Conversely, the future is not as encouraging as the support level of the next generation does not reflect the loyalty of the founding generation. This is a serious concern especially of the smaller, more distinctive Bible colleges with an undersized ethnographic and geographic constituency. The small Wesleyan/Holiness, separatist Baptist, or Restoration Bible colleges can resonate with the observations of one faculty member who said, "I traveled ten summers and parts of three more doing PR work, and across most of the eastern part of the United States and camp meetings from years ago would be filled with young people. But you know they are old gray beards now."[13] From not only a marketing perspective but also from a support standpoint the smaller Bible colleges have been forced to broaden their constituency and in most cases broaden their mission.

The aging of the external constituencies places certain survival pressures on a Bible college, but so does the aging of the internal constituencies. More than one half of the AABC institutions were founded after 1940 and many first generation leaders have passed the mantle of leadership. Part of the second generation of leaders is well-acquainted with the dreams and desires of the founders but a portion of the younger

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[12]Robert England, interview by author, 18 October 1993, Cincinnati, tape recording, God's Bible School and College, Cincinnati, OH.

[13]Kenneth Stetler, interview by author, 18 October 1993, Cincinnati, tape recording, God's Bible School and College, Cincinnati, OH.

generation has little ownership of the original intentions and purposes. One middle-aged administrator described the current state of leadership at the Bible college level. In the early years, he noted, the leadership was untrained for major positions such as president, academic dean, and dean of students. However, their heart for ministry, love for the institution, and sheer determination provided the impetus for their success in spite of limited formal training in higher education. For obvious reasons such as accreditation, credibility within the educational community, and better chances for survival, Bible colleges have been forced to "get people in those jobs that really know what they are doing."[14] However, the growing emphasis on professionalization at the leadership level will not guarantee that trained leadership understands and shares experientially the mission of the institution. This lack of ownership by the new generation of leadership will compromise the historic mission. Some believe that the new generation of professionals will insure the survival of the Bible college movement.

The changing of the guard within the Bible college movement is the least of its worries. The fundamental issue, as noted in the recent literature, is the burdensome want of resources. The tight fiscal situation, however, does not leave the Bible colleges without choices as many have made decisions which make the financial pressures seem even greater. Thus it is easy to think that the grass is greener on the other side—the side of the Christian liberal arts college. At one small institution with fewer than 100 students, an administrator admitted:

> I think the thing that worries us the most is that in this battle for bodies and bucks, we are all in it whether we like to admit it or not, that we are losing ground to the colleges that prepare for something other than ministry. Just to keep the institution going sometimes it takes more than bodies. One of the ways they are doing that is become a liberal arts college, a nice liberal arts college. I have no real philosophical argument with that. We [our fellowship] have several of them. That's a good option, but that isn't what we are. And so I think the big thing that is a fear is that eventually, not necessarily because of the AABC, but eventually we are going to see

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[14]Michael Chambers, interview by author, 16 February 1994, Kissimmee, FL., tape recording, Florida Christian College, Kissimmee, FL.

> many good solid Bible colleges, in order to stay alive, become liberal arts colleges, and when that happens then there is an erosion.[15]

The "erosion," of course, refers to some form of secularization.

In the interview process, if any discussion of the future did not specifically speak to the Christian liberal arts issue, there was usually acknowledgment that the respective Bible college was in some form or fashion broadening its mission by offering vocational majors which would be considered distantly related to full-time Christian service. This alludes to the earlier discussion of the redefinition of "Christian ministry." One faculty member, a former academic dean explained:

> I think if the faculty sat down, as we have on a couple of occasions, and just said what are some viable Christian vocations relating to the church, parachurch, whatever, social work, counseling, broadcasting, communications, journalism the lot can go on. Depending upon how large of the school you are, will depend on how many of those you can honestly offer and so forth. I don't see the faculty struggling with the concept of a broadening church-related vocation concept. I think the issue internally for us is with our resources and our financial commitments and our personnel. How many of these can we legitimately get into? So it's kind of like in one sense you want to be market sensitive, but in the other sense you have limited resources.[16]

As Bible colleges look to the future, some will attempt to maintain certain Bible college distinctives without becoming a Christian liberal arts college and others will become Christian liberal arts colleges while proclaiming to still be Bible colleges. Either option allows for some avenues of creative financial maneuvering, though it will mean two types of institutions within AABC. This is assuming, however, that the dual track Bible colleges with strong ministry and non-ministry programs remain in AABC after achieving regional accreditation. The smaller, more focused colleges will be satisfied with the accreditation afforded by AABC. One faculty member suggested this

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[15]William Walton, interview by author, 4 November 1993, Moberly, MO., tape recording, Central Christian College of the Bible, Moberly, MO.

[16]David Case, interview by author, 19 October 1993, Circleville, OH., tape recording, Circleville Bible College, Circleville, OH.

dualism within AABC when contemplating the next twenty-five years of the Bible college movement:

> I do believe that the attainment of regional accreditation by a sizable handful of our schools will create, if it hasn't already, a competitiveness that will be nearly impossible to match by most of the other smaller schools who are simply incapable at this time, and maybe ever, of doing that. I think there probably will be a growing sense of distinction in terms of perceived mission in those schools who do not have the regional accreditation. I think that they will become precisely defined as a skill-oriented, training-oriented, more exclusively Bible-oriented institution as opposed to others, perhaps like Lincoln who have a broader curriculum, broader offerings, perhaps broader mission. To be quite honest, I don't think that they can compete.[17]

The smaller more "skill-oriented" and more "exclusively Bible-oriented institutions" will not be able to compete with colleges such as Lincoln, but then they shouldn't have that desire. The uniqueness of their focused mission will provide them a market niche not only within the Bible college community but within any supporting denomination or fellowship as well. The question is whether or not the "upper-tier" Bible colleges will be able to compete in the world of the Christian liberal arts college—where they are currently positioning themselves.

A long time academic dean in the Bible college movement sees even more of a dichotomy as the Bible college movement continues to unfold. He predicts:

> Thirty years from now what I see in my crystal ball is that existing Bible colleges of any strength today will have gone down the road a long way toward Christian liberal arts colleges. We've had two of them in our own situation that came through the Bible college thing and now they just flat out and say, we are not a Bible college, we are a Christian liberal arts college. And if our fellowship, our denomination keeps growing, ministers will then come from two routes. One, I call those church basement Bible institutes—the way a lot of Bible colleges got their start in the first place. There will be a growth again of the church basement Bible institute, training ministers, inadequately, I think.[18]

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[17]Richard Knoop, interview by author, 22 September 1993, Lincoln, IL., tape recording, Lincoln Christian College, Lincoln, IL.

[18]Elmer Kirsch, interview by author, 2 November 1993, Springfield, MO., tape recording, Central Bible College, Springfield, MO.

Kirsch has just described the cycle of history within the Bible college movement. From the 1920s forward, some Bible training institutes became degree-granting Bible colleges only to become full-fledged Christian liberal arts colleges several years later. As this process was taking place—sometimes within the same denomination—a "church basement" Bible institute was being founded somewhere else in the United States. Today, that institution is most likely on the verge of becoming a Christian liberal arts college.

A review of the AABC documents and the faculty and administrative interviews suggests that this cycle of institutional development is reality. In the early days of AABC, Witmer, the early standard-bearer of the movement, cautioned against Bible colleges becoming liberal arts colleges.

> If it [the Bible college] seeks to meet both requirements of a general college and a Bible college, it will likely turn out to be neither fish nor fowl, neither a first-class general college nor an effective Bible college. It is very questionable whether a liberal-arts-Bible-college combination makes for institutional stability. One or the other will dominate and stamp the institution with its emphasis.[19]

These observations were made over thirty years ago before the enrollment downturn of the seventies and eighties. The current financial exigencies add further emphasis to Witmer's point. Keen administrators and faculty know that they must be either "fish" or "fowl" to survive. For the next decade many Bible colleges will be challenged to become Christian liberal arts colleges. Only the distinct, personality-rich Bible colleges will maintain the ethos of the historic Bible college and thus insure a more stable future.

The Future of the American Bible College: The Challenge

After searching current and historical documents and after conducting numerous interviews on Bible college campuses, some statement on the future of the American

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[19]Witmer, The Bible College Story, 182.

Bible college should be given. However, Robert Wuthnow's philosophy of forecasting the future must hold sway. He warned,

> We miss the whole point of the future when we approach it as something to predict. Then we become forecasters, trying to guess tomorrow's weather so we can carry umbrellas or sunglasses. The real reason we reflect on the future, I suspect, is not to control it, but to give ourselves room in the present to think about what we are doing.[20]

There is no question that this study reflects on the future of the Bible college movement in light of current pressures, practices, and policies.

Predicting the future of the Bible college movement is not even a remote possibility since forecasting implies some historical evidence of stability or staticity. The Bible college movement has been anything but static as institutions have merged, closed, or blended into the landscape of the Christian liberal arts college. Interestingly, in Kallgren's 1989 survey of forty-two Bible college presidents, 82 percent believed that their respective institutions should reassess their current mission while the same percentage rejected the notion that Bible colleges should become Christian liberal arts colleges. Other mixed signals noted by Kallgren were that four of ten presidents agreed that Bible colleges should offer non-ministry majors alongside the church-related vocational major while three in ten felt that the movement should narrow its focus by pursuing "the original vision of training Christian workers for vocational/lay ministry roles quickly and at low cost."[21] The presidents themselves not only differed on the future agenda of the Bible college movement, but also reflected the ambivalence found on many campuses. Within this general state of perplexity it is helpful to make recommendations which will assist the Bible college to think past AD 2000 and prepare

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[20]Robert Wuthnow, Christianity in the 21st Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4.

[21]Robert Kallgren, Bible Colleges: Where Have They Been and Where Should They Go? (Columbia, SC.: By the author, Columbia Bible College, 1989), 55.

for an effective presence for years to come. The mandate for the future includes broader community recommendations which will hopefully affect specific institutional action.

The Bible College must Establish an Enduring Institutional Culture

Kuh and Whitt define an institutional culture as "the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus."[22] An institutional culture serves as the framework by which one can understand the mission and purpose of each Bible college. The institutional culture is the labyrinth which all constituencies, especially new community members, must understand as well as traverse. Once the maze of the institutional culture has been navigated, the oriented and hopefully loyal constituent will bring stability to the institution for many years to come. Thus, every Bible college must first establish and then communicate its institutional culture to faculty, students, alumni, staff, and the educational community in general.

The advantages of the Bible college is that the unique distinctives of such a culture are for the most part quite pronounced. History, doctrine, denomination, geography, lifestyle expectations, and mission are all characteristics of an institutional culture. The challenge before the American Bible college in the 1990s is maintaining such an ethos. The societal impact of the last quarter of the twentieth century has diluted the doctrinal, denominational, and lifestyle components. Bible colleges themselves have failed to accentuate their historical roots to the point that present and future constituencies might assume the Bible college as simply another church-related college.

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[22]George D. Kuh and Elizabeth J. Whitt, The Invisible Tapestry: Culture in American Colleges and Universities, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1 (Washington, DC.: Association for the Study of Higher Education, 1988), 12-13.

Supporting churches and denominations have the responsibility to insure that the culture of a related Bible college is contemporary for each generation within the parameters of its institutional culture.

Of more concern, however, is the Bible college which itself bows to internal or external pressures and sanitizes its own institutional ethos. Rather than have any clear-cut defining boundaries as an institutional personality, many Bible colleges have opted for mission statements such as "We train Kingdom servants." Such a generic mission statement will hamstring any Bible college consciously attempting to build and communicate a distinct campus culture. Bible college leadership must define, delineate, and communicate an institutional culture or mission which will endure from generation to generation. Such an effort must be made if the Bible college movement is to survive into the twenty-first century.

The Bible College must Create Institutional Distinctives

The Bible college is distinct from other types of institutions such as the community college, the comprehensive liberal arts college, and of course, the research university. However, in this context, creating institutional distinctives speaks to the specifics which differentiate Bible College A from Bible College A1 within the same denomination or distinct from Bible College B located two hours away. What are the institutional values and personality which might make a student attend a Bible college eight hours from home when there is a very similar one only three hours away? Clear, institutional distinctives assist in developing a sense of purpose and aid in molding a personality into the hopefully specific mission statement of the Bible college. However, such highly distinctive institutions are not without peril. Townsend explains, "Being highly distinctive can hurt an institution, primarily by limiting it to a very small market

campuses. A Bible college without personality and without heart has lost the excitement and intentions of its founders.

The Bible College must Articulate Its Institutional Saga

Besides the establishment of a general institutional culture and the creation of specific institutional distinctives, the Bible college must continuously articulate its institutional saga. Telling the story and reliving the hopes and dreams of the founding generation is the foundation on which the culture and distinctives must be built. The stories of faith in initial land or building acquisitions or the heartfelt burden to establish a training center for a generation of preachers must be told. These word pictures inspire a shared vision and build a loyalty among the constituencies of the Bible college. Institutional publications and pronouncements must continuously reflect on the founders who prayed for a specific plot of land and spent hours upon hours in recruiting other like-minded souls to the cause. Such true accounts must be articulated to the publics of the Bible college as reinforcement of its culture and distinctives.

Some Bible colleges have neglected the advantage in building a campus culture given them by their roots. For example, as discussed previously, some Bible colleges have found it difficult to integrate the general education core into the curriculum. On some campuses, this is due in large part to the majority of the constituency which views general education a "secular" in its relationship to the college. However, the Bible colleges with a strong heritage of viewing the person holistically should use such a foundational value as leverage in presenting and developing a strong general education core within the overall curriculum. By using the historical traditions in developing and promoting policy, a sense of ownership of those traditions emerges on campus. The more constituents who sense such ownership of institutional traditions and philosophical underpinnings the more vibrant and strong will be the health of an institution. The

converse is also true. The less ownership the more anemic the Bible college will be. Such a condition promises repeated trips to the board room in search of a remedy.

The Bible College must Itself Practice the Institutional Mission

A fourth recommendation for survival in a more general institutional sense is that the Bible college must practice its own mission. If the mission of the college is to train men and women to teach the Bible and to share the gospel of Jesus Christ then the college itself must be corporately practicing those purposes. Sponsoring contemporary youth events, men's and women's seminars, Bible conferences, radio programs, musicals, and pastors' conferences are examples of corporate ministry. Ministry must be the genuine focus as an institution fools no one when recruitment of students or solicitation of funds is a hidden agenda.

In a 1982 article in Christianity Today, the former president of Moody Bible Institute, George Sweeting, wrote that "a school that does not share the faith corporately, as well as individually will ultimately not keep the faith."[24] While these are strong words, it does take some corporate intestinal fortitude to budget for and service those activities which might be considered corporate ministry. This practice of institutional ministry is also a major forum by which the institutional culture, distinctives, and history can be communicated to the major constituencies.

The Bible College must Establish Relationships with the Broader Educational Community

The survival of the American Bible college is dependent on its relationships with the educational community outside of AABC. Historically cautious of its relationship to the "world," this separatist mindset has had a crippling effect on the Bible college movement, not to mention the unbiblical manifestation of fear and pride reflected by

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[24]George Sweeting, "Bible Colleges and Institutes: Chronicling the Vision of a Century," Christianity Today, 5 February 1982, 41.

some. Bible colleges must be the model of integrity and to operate an educational institution without adequate knowledge of higher education standards and expectations does a disservice to the cause of Christ. The administration and faculty of a Bible college must be on the cutting edge of strategic planning, quality management, curricular reform, accreditation, and assessment—just to name a few. The professional and regional accreditation associations have much to offer the Bible college movement and the networks afforded by participation in national higher education conferences will greatly assist the Bible college in its struggle for survival. The Bible college has great strides to make in this area.

Another avenue of assistance is the community of the Christian liberal arts colleges. The Bible college is inherently a very different institution than the Christian liberal arts college, yet they both exist to build and strengthen the kingdom of God. Christian liberal arts colleges have the experience in higher education which can prove invaluable to the Bible college. However, a Bible college with an institutional ethos similar to the Christian liberal arts college may not find such a warm welcome. Aside from competing for many of the same students, the haze surrounding the mission of the Bible college creates barriers as the Christian liberal arts college tries to understand its counterpart. The disintegration of a specific mission and the growing lack of distinctives within the Bible college movement affects its relationship to other educational entities. The leadership of a Bible college must build bridges to the broader educational community to learn the survival skills necessary to endure another generation of training Christian leaders.

These five community recommendations essential for Bible college survival must be considered by the Bible college community as it postures itself for the next century. The problem to be faced by most Bible colleges is that their current mission statement no longer reflects their original mission. Thus, these Bible colleges cannot legitimately

make use of their rich historical traditions in molding a new campus culture. As this study has shown, the American Bible college finds itself in a major identity crisis, situated somewhere between the Christian liberal arts college and the traditional Bible college given primarily to the training of men and women to step into full-time vocational Christian ministry. A vague, ill-defined mission creates a vague, ill-defined campus ethos which clouds the former, more distinct campus personality and culture.

For a Bible college to survive the next twenty-five years it must either become a Christian liberal arts college or return to its historically defined roots of the 1940s or even 1960s. Either way, once a target is identified, the greater chances of it being hit. The Bible college must establish an institutional culture, create and communicate institutional distinctives, articulate its institutional history, practice the institutional mission, and establish relationships with the broader higher education community. The Bible college cannot neglect these community recommendations essential for future survival and health.

An Eye to the Future

For over one hundred years the Bible college movement has taken pride in maintaining faithfulness to its historic mission. At the dawn of 2000 AD, Bible colleges find themselves immersed in survival strategies, groping for the best tools and techniques to guarantee themselves another decade or two of existence. From 1975 to 1990, the total enrollment at forty-six, or roughly half, of the AABC colleges declined by nearly 10 percent. During the same period, the enrollment at thirteen seminaries and thirteen Christian liberal arts colleges went up 23 and 19 percent respectively.[25] It is no small wonder that Bible colleges are placing themselves on the same playing field as the Christian liberal arts colleges. Only a handful of healthy Bible colleges will be

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[25]Kallgren, "Invisible Colleges," 27.

able to survive the metamorphosis to a Christian liberal arts college. For many, the move into the Christian liberal arts sector has been a panic-driven decision understood to be the last resort for survival.[26] There is, however, an alternative.

The Illinois Institute of Technology had unconsciously diversified to the point that eighty faculty members and twenty-seven majors were not directly related to "technology." In a desire for better fiscal health it returned to a more defined understanding of what IIT was as an undergraduate institution. This has been the challenge of the wise voices within the Bible college movement. In the early years of the organized movement a breadth of mission or a move to a Christian liberal arts model was viewed as a loss of direction with secularization overtones. However, in the last ten years the emphasis has changed. A Bible college which chooses to broaden its mission is not warned of the "slippery slope" to secularization but of a slow death.

A Bible college which claims to be a Bible college and develops an institutional culture similar to a Christian liberal arts college will not have the support from either the Bible college or the Christian liberal arts community. Furthermore, by stating one mission and communicating a second, the "double vision" of the Bible college will result in neither target being hit. The only hope for the Bible college which is committed to its historic mission of training men and women for full-time vocational Christian ministry is the return to a distinct mission which drives the institutional culture and creates a campus personality. This will give the Bible college a healthy self-identity fully capable of meeting the needs of each constituency and fully respected within the higher education community.

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[26]John A. Martin, "The Last Years of Dallas Bible College (1983-1985)" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Texas, 1991). This work describes in detail the steps taken by a Bible college to sell its urban property, move to a rural setting, and begin offering non-ministry majors. The lack of focus destroyed any strategic planning which would allow it to survive as a ministry training institution in one of the larger metropolitan areas of the United States.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

For over one hundred years, a small segment of American higher education has dedicated itself to the practical training of Christian workers in order to assist the local church in evangelism, education, and edification. The Bible college began as a small, urban, Bible training school designed to meet the growing ministry needs within conservative Protestantism which did not require a seminary degree. YMCA leaders, Sunday school teachers, street evangelists, and rescue mission workers were just some of the early posts filled by men and women trained in Chicago, Boston, and New York. The majority of the early students left their jobs and apprenticeships to study the Bible systematically, to deepen their spiritual lives, and to share their faith with the masses.

By the 1920s, the Fundamentalist movement was clearly defined and had recruited these early Bible institutes to aid in the battle for the Bible. Such an alliance embedded within the Bible college movement the primacy of Scriptures as the sole authority for individual faith and practice. As these Bible colleges matured, both form and function positioned these institutions within the realm of higher education. However, the distinct mission, and in many cases, a separatist mindset prevented the majority from participating in the world of American higher education. It has only been in the last generation that many Bible colleges have joined the ranks of the private, degree-granting, church-related colleges and universities.

The early years of the Bible training institute were full of life. Booming industrial cities together with the swarming numbers of immigrants were ready audiences for the street preachers and rescue mission workers trained at the fledgling Bible schools. Men

such as D. L. Moody in Chicago and A. J. Gordon in Boston laid the groundwork for the wave of Bible schools founded to train city evangelists and foreign missionaries. The early Bible training institutes were established to respond to the social and spiritual needs of the growing American urban society. However, in roared the 1920s, and with it fundamentalist firebrands such as William Bell Riley and William Jennings Bryan, both bent on salvaging an inerrant, unchanging set of scriptures from the Darwinian revolution which had overwhelmed not only academe but American Protestantism as well. New Bible institutes dotted the American educational landscape as a reaction to such liberal influences.

Curriculum in these new Bible institutes reflected longer and more in-depth programs as they sought to become the alternatives to the Protestant seminaries. An intense separatism held sway as Bible institutes refused any involvement with secular or "questionable" religious agencies—governmental or educational—which might have an undue liberalizing effect on them. Riley's Northwestern (MN) schools became alternatives to the "liberal" American Baptist colleges and Cincinnati Bible Institute became a conservative option to the established colleges within the Disciples of Christ. The fledgling Assemblies of God denomination developed regional Bible training schools from annual camp meetings to train clergy and staff as well as "rightly divide the Word of Truth." Older Bible institutes such as Moody initiated pastoral majors for fear that seminary graduates no longer revered nor preached the literal word of God.

The aftermath of World War II, however, saw a reawakening for not only the Bible college but all of American higher education. What some might consider institutional paranoia gave way to cooperation as Bible colleges partook of the advantages provided by the increased accessibility and availability offered by the exploding higher education community. In 1947, the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) was founded and it served the Bible college community monumentally by standardizing curriculum,

faculty pay, admissions requirements, and library quotas, just to name a few of its tasks. By the middle 1960s, Bible colleges participated in the federal financial aid programs and some toyed with the thought of regional accreditation. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, most Bible colleges were slowly and cautiously merging into the mainstream of American higher education—but not without a price. Choices were made at this time which made Bible colleges an option to the average high school graduate in America. Such viability, however, created a compromise in mission—an issue which to this day plagues the Bible college.

This crisis of mission has been with the Bible college movement for fifty years. In 1947, when AABC was formed, representatives of the charter institutions warned of the possibility of Bible colleges eventually broadening their mission to become liberal arts colleges. The campus interviews conducted for this study repeatedly described the current Bible college as having this very duality of purpose about which they had been forewarned. AABC itself has not been helpful in the area as it has facilitated, especially in the last decade, the ability of Bible colleges to no longer require a pure Bible major of every student. Such allowances have given rise to Bible colleges with fewer students enrolled in the historic ministry majors than in such fields as business, psychology, general studies, and education.

With the loss of the educational, and in some cases, theological distinctives, it is not surprising that Bible college administrators and faculty bemoan the loss of the idealistic, service mentality once so prevalent amongst its students. The motivation of training for full-time Christian service in order to meet the physical, social, and spiritual needs of society has been lost. This, coupled with the gradual neutralization of fundamentalism, has resulted in the loss of any barometer of definition by which the Bible college once identified itself. Thus, to survive, many Bible colleges have opted for

the *form* of a Bible college but the *function* of a Christian liberal arts college. Such duality of mission will only lead to failure.

In serving the student of the late twentieth century, the Bible colleges have chosen to compete with other evangelical Protestant colleges. Even Bible colleges with a narrow ministry focus have been pressured into seeking regional accreditation to insure proper credit transfer and quality of curricular programs. Initially, this was a difficult task within certain regional accrediting agencies. The Western Association of Colleges and Schools was the first to accredit Bible colleges while the regions with the most Bible colleges represented, North Central and Southern, struggled in the early 1960s to understand the specialized nature of the Bible college.

Fort Wayne Bible College (IN) along with St. Paul Bible College (MN) were the first cases faced by the North Central Association (NCA) in the early 1960s. St. Paul was rejected for candidacy while Fort Wayne, even though it attained candidate status and retained a consultant from a Big Ten university, was rejected for full membership. Fifteen years later, St. Paul Bible College, now known as Crown College, achieved full membership with NCA in 1980. Today, most Bible colleges have attained or are considering regional accreditation. The fears of oversight by a "secular" organization have subsided. The more important goals of institutional credibility and institutional integrity—with respect to transfer credits—are all the more necessary in the maturing, yet competitive, community of Bible colleges.

Foundational to the regional accreditation issue has been the Bible college's treatment of the general education curriculum. Bible colleges have been forced to articulate a curriculum which will prepare the student to minister to a less homogenous society and will create a broader foundation on which to build the Bible, ministry, and professional training courses. Naturally, such a breadth of curriculum leads to questions by various segments of the Bible college community. In the early years of the

Bible college movement, general education was viewed as a necessary evil. It was seen as the threat to the unique emphasis characteristic of a Bible institute. However, by the 1980s, and with impetus from the regional accreditation efforts, the general education core began to be understood as the window to the society in which the graduate would some day minister. One assistant professor, himself a Bible college graduate, described general education as "the tool to exegete society" in much the same way as the knowledge of Greek was used to unlock the New Testament. General education, when fully integrated into the Bible and ministry curriculum, is a necessity for understanding and ministering to the present society.

For some in the Bible college movement, the issues of regional accreditation and general education were the first steps toward the "slippery slope" of secularization. Usually Harvard, Yale, and Princeton enter the discussion at this point as exemplars of private, church-related institutions of higher education which have left their spiritual roots. The concerns of the Bible college should not be such philosophical or theological drift which rejects the divine and His role in fulfilling the purposes of the Bible college. The Bible college must be aware of the subtle methodological secularization which is taking place on campus. When "Bible," or some other mission-specific descriptor, is removed from the name of a Bible college, so too, the paragraphs in the college catalog defining the mission of the Bible college also disappear. Eventually trustees are appointed and faculty recruited who have no history of a distinct, unique purpose within that respective Bible college community. The Bible college has built strong defense mechanisms to protect its theological and philosophical underpinnings, but it has failed to acknowledge and defend against the practical changes which undermine the intended mission of the Bible college. This is the secularization motif which endangers the Bible college the most.

The full participation of Bible colleges in the mainstream of higher education has forced the Bible colleges to interact with the key issues confronting them as they face a second century of service. A crisis of mission or institutional identity has arisen as many Bible colleges seek to not only train students for a vocational Christian ministry but for professional positions in non-ministry fields as well. The Bible college has also struggled with a challenge to its credibility. Quality in American higher education is measured by enduring and successfully completing the regional accreditation process. Curricular excellence is gauged by reasoned, well-integrated general education into the Bible college program. Both issues—general education and regional accreditation—have threatened some constituencies within the Bible college movement. Such serious involvement with the higher education establishment has been a signal of secularization to some. In reality, the Bible college has many defense mechanisms which will prevent any major doctrinal or philosophical changes, but the increasing breadth of curriculum, the redefinition of Christian ministry, and the institutional name changes all lay the groundwork for potential secularization.

As the new century dawns, the Bible college finds itself at a crossroads between maintaining its course as a Bible college or becoming a liberal arts college. Some are trying to be both—a sure guarantee of failure. Others recognize the importance of establishing an institutional ethos, history, and a distinct educational niche. Only a commitment to its unique, historical mission will allow the Bible college to survive as a Bible college into the twenty-first century.

APPENDIX

CAMPUS VISITATIONS

Florida

Florida Bible College (Kissimmee)
Florida Christian College (Kissimmee)
Hobe Sound Bible College (Hobe Sound)*
Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God (Lakeland)

Illinois

Lincoln Christian College (Lincoln)
Moody Bible Institute (Chicago)*

Indiana

Taylor University/Fort Wayne (Fort Wayne)*#
[formerly Summit Christian College]

Iowa

Faith Baptist Bible College (Ankeny)
Vennard College (University Park)
[closed, December 1995]

Michigan

Grace Bible College (Wyoming)
Great Lakes Christian College (Lansing)
Reformed Bible College (Grand Rapids)
William Tyndale College (Farmington Hills)*#

Minnesota

North Central Bible College (Minneapolis)#
Pillsbury Baptist Bible College (Owatonna)#

Missouri

Baptist Bible College (Springfield)
Calvary Bible College (Kansas City)
Central Bible College (Springfield)
Central Christian College of the Bible (Moberly)
Ozark Christian College (Joplin)
St. Louis Christian College (Florissant)

Ohio

Cincinnati Bible College (Cincinnati)
Circleville Bible College (Circleville)
God's Bible School & College (Cincinnati)

*Bible colleges visited for documentary research only—no official interviews.

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19 March 1996
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